



THE
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
YEAR BOOK



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THE
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
YEAR BOOK



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE present selection of passages from Dr. Holmes's writings follows that adopted in the Holmes Birthday Book published several years ago. The selection then made had such regard for significant days, and offered so wide a range of illustration of Dr. Holmes's genius, that the Publishers are confident it will be equally acceptable in its present form.

Boston, *October 15, 1894.*



I don't believe anything I've written is as good as it seemed to me when I wrote it, — the Old Master stopped, for he was afraid he was lying, — not *much* that I've written, at any rate, — he said — with a smile at the honesty which made him qualify his statement. But I do know this: I have struck a good many chords, first and last, in the consciousness of other people. I confess to a tender feeling for my little brood of thoughts. When they have been welcomed and praised it has pleased me, if at any time they have been rudely handled and spitefully entreated it has cost me a little worry. I don't despise reputation, and I should like to be remembered as having said something worth lasting well enough to last.

The Poet at the Breakfast-Table

January.

The cheerful fire-light's glow
Streamed through the casement o'er the spectral
snow ;

Here, while the night-wind wreaked its frantic will
On the loose ocean and the rock-bound hill,
Rent the cracked topsail from its quivering yard,
And rived the oak a thousand storms had scarred,
Fenced by these walls the peaceful taper shone,
Nor felt a breath to slant its trembling cone.

Not all unblest the mild interior scene
When the red curtain spread its falling screen ;
O'er some light task the lonely hours were past,
And the long evening only flew too fast ;
Or the wide chair its leathern arms would lend
In genial welcome to some easy friend. . . .

Such the warm life this dim retreat has known,
Not quite deserted when its guests were flown ;
Nay, filled with friends, an unobtrusive set,
Guiltless of calls and cards and etiquette,
Ready to answer, never known to ask,
Claiming no service, prompt for every task.

THE STUDY.

JANUARY 1.

The wonderful exhibition of the Seasons is about to commence ; four shows under one cover ; the best ventilated place of entertainment in this or any other system ; the stage lighted by solar, lunar, and astral lamps. Performance in twelve parts. Overture by the feathered choir ; after which the white drop curtain will rise, showing the remarkable succession of natural scenery designed and executed solely for this planet, — real forests, meadows, water, earth, skies, etc. At the conclusion of each series of performances the storm-chorus will be given with the whole strength of the wind-instrument orchestra, and the splendid snow scene will be introduced, illuminated by grand flashes of the Aurora Borealis.

THE SEASONS.



JANUARY 2.

Deal gently with us, ye who read !
Our largest hope is unfulfilled, —
The promise still outruns the deed, —
The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find ;
Our ripest fruit we never reach ;
The flowering moments of the mind
Drop half their petals in our speech.

TO MY READERS.

JANUARY 3.

I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, — but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JANUARY 4.

Grandmother's mother : her age I guess,
Thirteen summers, or something less ;
Girlish bust, but womanly air ;
Smooth square forehead with uprolled hair,
Lips that lover has never kissed ;
Taper fingers and slender wrist ;
Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade ;
So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
Sits unmoving and broods serene.
Hold up the canvas full in view, —
Look ! there's a rent the light shines through,
Dark with a century's fringe of dust, —
That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust !
Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter told.

DOROTHY Q.
A Family Portrait.

JANUARY 5.

It seems rather odd that winter does not fairly begin until the sun has turned the corner, and is every day shining higher and higher, in fact bringing summer to us as fast as he can. But the astronomical date corresponds with the popular belief as well as the meteorological record. "As the day lengthens, the cold strengthens." THE SEASONS.

A holy life is Heaven's unquestioned text ;
That shining guidance doubt can never mar, —
The pillar's flame, the light of Bethlehem's star !

MEDICAL SOCIETY DINNER.



JANUARY 6.

The welcome angel came
Ere yet his eye with age was dim,
Or bent his stately frame ;
His weapon still was bright,
His shield was lifted high
To slay the wrong, to save the right, —
What happier hour to die ?

Thou orderest all things well ;
Thy servant's work was done ;
He lived to hear Oppression's knell,
The shouts for Freedom won.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES SUMNER.

JANUARY 7.

There is one disadvantage which the man of philosophical habits of mind suffers, as compared with the man of action. While he is taking an enlarged and rational view of the matter before him, he lets his chance slip through his fingers.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Run if you like, but try to keep your breath ;
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death ;
And with new notions, — let me change the rule, —
Don't strike the iron till it 's slightly cool.

A RHYMED LESSON.



JANUARY 8.

Hospitality is a good deal a matter of latitude, I suspect. The shade of a palm-tree serves an African for a hut ; his dwelling is all door and no walls ; everybody can come in. To make a morning call on an Esquimaux acquaintance, one must creep through a long tunnel ; his house is all walls and no door except such a one as an apple with a worm-hole has. One might, very probably, trace a regular gradation between these two extremes. . . . A good deal which in colder regions is ascribed to mean dispositions, belongs really to mean temperature. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 9.

Don't flatter yourselves that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies; they are ready enough to tell them. Good breeding *never* forgets that *amour propre* is universal.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 10.

The whole essence of true gentle-breeding lies in the wish and the art to be agreeable. Good-breeding is *surface Christianity*. Every look, movement, tone, expression, subject of discourse, that may give pain to another is habitually excluded from conversational intercourse.

As a general rule, that society where flattery is acted is much more agreeable than that where it is spoken. Attention and deference don't require you to make fine speeches expressing your sense of unworthiness (lies) and returning all the compliments paid you.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Solid and square behold majestic Shaw,
A mass of wisdom and a mine of law.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

JANUARY 11.

The great minds are those with a wide span, which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other. Logicians carry the surveyor's chain over the track of which these are the true explorers. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

The wider the intellect, the larger and simpler the expressions in which its knowledge is embodied. The inferior race, the degraded and enslaved people, the small-minded individual, live in the details which to larger minds and more advanced tribes of men reduce themselves to axioms and laws.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 12.

We have a right to be proud of our Pilgrim and Puritan fathers. . . . They were ready to do and to suffer anything for their faith, and a faith which breeds heroes is better than an unbelief which leaves nothing worth being a hero for.

THE PULPIT AND THE PEW.

It's faith in something and enthusiasm for something that makes a life worth looking at.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 13.

Every word we speak is the medal of a dead thought or feeling, struck in the die of some human experience, worn smooth by innumerable contacts, and always transferred warm from one to another. By words we share the common consciousness of the race, which has shaped itself in these symbols.

ELSIE VENNER.



JANUARY 14.

Do you mean to say the pun-question is not clearly settled in your minds? Let me lay down the law upon the subject. Life and language are alike sacred. Homicide and *verbicide* — that is, violent treatment of a word with fatal results to its legitimate meaning, which is its life — are alike forbidden.

A pun is *primâ facie* an insult to the person you are talking with. It implies utter indifference to or sublime contempt for his remarks, no matter how serious.

People that make puns are like wanton boys that put coppers on the railroad tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little trick may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 15.

I like children,—I like them, and I respect them. Pretty much all the honest truth-telling there is in the world is done by them. Do you know they play the part in the household which the king's jester, who very often had a mighty long head under his cap and bells, used to play for a monarch?

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

One of the greatest pleasures of childhood is found in the mysteries which it hides from the scepticism of the elders, and works up into small mythologies of its own.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JANUARY 16.

Poets, like painters, their machinery claim,
And verse bestows the varnish and the frame;
Our grating English, whose Teutonic jar
Shakes the racked axle of Art's rattling car,
Fits like mosaic in the lines that gird
Fast in its place each many-angled word. . . .

The sweet Spenserian, gathering as it flows,
Sweeps gently onward to its dying close,
Where waves on waves in long succession pour,
Till the ninth billow melts along the shore.

POETRY.

JANUARY 17.

Shalt thou be honest? Ask the worldly schools,
And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools;
Prudent? Industrious? Let not modern pens
Instruct "Poor Richard's" fellow-citizens.

A RHYMED LESSON.

Some larger soul hath lived and wrought,
Whose sight was open to embrace
The boundless realms of deed and thought.

BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER.



JANUARY 18.

Look on that form, — with eye dilating scan
The stately mould of nature's kingliest man!
Tower-like he stands in life's unfaded prime;
Ask you his name? None asks a second time!
He from the land his outward semblance takes,
Where storm-swept mountains watch o'er slum-
bering lakes.

See in the impress which the body wears
How its imperial might the soul declares.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

No gloom that stately shape can hide,
No change uncrown its brow; behold!
Dark, calm, large-fronted, lightning-eyed,
Earth has no double from its mould!

BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

JANUARY 19.

The gods of the old heathen are the servants of to-day. Neptune, Vulcan, Æolus, and the bearer of the thunderbolt himself have stepped down from their pedestals and put on our livery. We cannot always master them, neither can we always master our servant, the horse, but we have put a bridle on the wildest natural agencies. The mob of elemental forces is as noisy and turbulent as ever, but the standing army of civilization keeps it well under, except for an occasional outbreak.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 20.

The writer of many pleasant books, filled with lively descriptions of society, which he studied on the outside with a quick eye for form and color, and with a certain amount of sentiment, not very deep, but real, though somewhat frothed over by his worldly experiences.

There used to be in the gallery of the Luxembourg a picture of Hippolytus and Phædra, in which the beautiful young man always reminded me of Willis, in spite of the shortcomings of the living face as compared with the ideal. The painted youth is still blooming on the canvas, but the fresh-cheeked, jaunty young author of the year 1830 has long faded out of human sight.

THE NEW PORTFOLIO.

JANUARY 21.

The more wheels there are in a watch or a brain, the more trouble they are to take care of. The movements of exaltation which belong to genius are egotistic by their very nature. A calm, clear mind, not subject to the spasms and crises which are so often met with in creative or intensely perceptive natures, is the best basis for love or friendship. — Observe, I am talking about *minds*. I won't say, the more intellect, the less capacity for loving; for that would do wrong to the understanding and reason.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JANUARY 22.

Genius comes in clusters, and shines rarely as a single star. You may see this law showing itself in the brief periods of glory which make the names of Pericles and Augustus illustrious with reflected splendors; in the painters, the sculptors, the scholars of "Leo's golden days"; in the authors of the Elizabethan time; in the poets of the first part of this century following that dreary period, suffering alike from the silence of Cowper and the song of Hayley.

THE INEVITABLE TRIAL.

JANUARY 23.

Between the last dandelion and violet — they have been found in December — and the first spring blossom which lifts the snow in its calyx, there is a frozen *interregnum* in the vegetable world, save for the life-in-death of the solemn evergreens, the pines and firs and spruces.

THE SEASONS.

Why can't somebody give us a list of things that everybody thinks and nobody says, and another list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks?

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JANUARY 24.

This is a manly world we live in. Our reverence is good for nothing if it does not begin with self-respect. Occidental manhood springs from that as its basis; Oriental manhood finds the greatest satisfaction in self-abasement. There is no use in trying to graft the tropical palm upon the Northern pine. The same divine forces underlie the growth of both, but leaf and flower and fruit must follow the law of race, of soil, of climate.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 25.

While Shenstone strained in feeble flights
With Corydon and Phillis, —
While Wolfe was climbing Abraham's heights
To snatch the Bourbon lilies, —

Who heard the wailing infant's cry,
The babe beneath the sheeling,
Whose song to-night in every sky
Will shake earth's starry ceiling.

.
We love him, praise him, just for this :
In every form and feature,
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,
He saw his fellow-creature !

THE BURNS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.



JANUARY 26.

A lyric conception hits me like a bullet in the forehead. I have often had the blood drop from my cheeks when it struck, and felt that I turned as white as death. Then comes a creeping as of centipedes running down the spine, — then a gasp and a great jump of the heart, — then a sudden flush and a beating in the vessels of the head, — then a long sigh, — and the poem is written . . . I said written, but I did not say *copied*.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 27.

By music we reach those special states of consciousness which, being without *form*, cannot be shaped with the mosaics of the vocabulary.

ELSIE VENNER.

Is it an idle dream that nature shares
Our joys, our griefs, our pastimes, and our cares?
Is there no summons when, at morning's call,
The sable vestments of the darkness fall?
Does not meek evening's low-voiced *Ave* blend
With the soft vesper as its notes ascend?
Does not the sunshine call us to rejoice?
Is there no meaning in the storm-cloud's voice?
No silent message when from midnight skies
Heaven looks upon us with its myriad eyes?

THE SCHOOL-BOY.



JANUARY 28.

I thank God that a great many people believe a great deal more than I do. I think, when it comes to serious matters, I like those who believe more than I do better than those who believe less.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Every now and then a man's mind is stretched by a new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to its former dimensions.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 29.

Each closing circle of our sunlit sphere
Seems to bring heaven more near:
Can we not dream that those we love
Are listening in the world above
And smiling as they hear
The voices known so well of friends that still are
dear? H. C. M., H. S., J. K. W.

Are angel faces, silent and serene,
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dream-like efforts, whose unreal strife,
Are but the preludes to a larger life?

A RHYMED LESSON.



JANUARY 30.

Lively emotions very commonly do not strike us full in front, but obliquely from the side; a scene or incident in *undress* often affects us more than one in full costume. The rush that should have flooded my soul in the Coliseum did not come. But walking one day in the fields about the city, I stumbled over a fragment of broken masonry, and lo! the World's Mistress in her stone girdle — *altæ mænia Romæ* — rose before me and whitened my cheek with her pale shadow as never before or since.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JANUARY 31.

Most persons have died before they expire,—
died to all earthly longings, so that the last breath
is only, as it were, the locking of the door of the
already deserted mansion.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
“They are gone.”

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

THE LAST LEAF.

February.

Through my north window, in the wintry
weather, —

My airy oriel on the river shore, —

I watch the sea-fowl as they flock together

Where late the boatman flashed his dripping
oar.

I see the solemn gulls in council sitting

On some broad ice-floe, pondering long and late,
While overhead the home-bound ducks are flitting
And leave the tardy conclave in debate,

Those weighty questions in their breasts revolving

Whose deeper meaning science never learns,
Till at some reverend elder's look dissolving,
The speechless senate silently adjourns.

But when along the waves the shrill northeaster

Shrieks through the laboring coaster's shrouds
"Beware!"

The pale bird, kindling like a Christmas feaster

When some wild chorus shakes the vinous air,

Flaps from the leaden wave in fierce rejoicing,

Feels heaven's dumb lightning thrill his torpid
nerves,

Now on the blast his whistling plumage poisoning,

Now wheeling, whirling in fantastic curves.

MY AVIARY.

FEBRUARY 1.

Those who are really awake to the sights and sounds which the procession of the months offers them find endless entertainment and instruction. Yet there are great multitudes who are present at as many as threescore and ten performances, without ever really looking at the scenery, or listening to the music, or observing the chief actors. Some are too busy with their books or their handicraft, and many women, even, who ought to enjoy the sights, keep their eyes on their work or their knitting, so that they seem to see next to nothing of what is going on.

THE SEASONS.

FEBRUARY 2.

To be recognized as standing at the head of the medical profession in a large city implies a previous long and arduous struggle in one who comes unheralded and unknown. Every step of such a man's ascent must be made like an Alpine climber's in the icy steep of indifference; fortunate for him if he does not slip or is not crushed before he reaches the summit, where there is hardly room for more than one at a time.

The art, which is long, does not perish with the fleeting life of its wisest practitioner; but to many the best eulogy of the best physician who comes after him will be that he recalls to their memory the skill, the wisdom, the character of Dr. Edward Clarke.

INTRODUCTION TO "VISIONS."

FEBRUARY 3.

My friends, I go (always other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. . . . One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a boor or a shabby fellow. One may have none of them and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



FEBRUARY 4.

Since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

DOROTHY Q.

Quincy, whose spirit breathes the selfsame fire
That filled the bosom of his youthful sire,
Who for the altar bore the kindled torch
To freedom's temple, dying in its porch.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

FEBRUARY 5.

A woman who does not carry a halo of good feeling and desire to make everybody contented about with her wherever she goes, — an atmosphere of grace, mercy, and peace, of at least six feet radius, which wraps every human being upon whom she voluntarily bestows her presence, and so flatters him with the comfortable thought that she is rather glad he is alive than otherwise, is n't worth the trouble of talking to, *as a woman* ; she may do well enough to hold discussions with.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 6.

Brownell weathered the great battle-storms on the same deck with Farragut, and has told their story as nobly as his leader made the story for him to tell. . . . The words themselves have the weight and the rush of shot and shell, and the verses seem aflame with the passion of the conflict, — then as the strife calms itself after the victory is won, the wild dithyrambic stanzas rock themselves into sweet even cadences. . . . They are to all the drawing-room battle-poems as the torn flags of our victorious armadas to the stately ensigns that dressed their ships in harbor. New modes of warfare thundered their demand for a new poet to describe them ; and Nature has answered in the voice of our Battle-Laureate.

OUR BATTLE-LAUREATE.

FEBRUARY 7.

Why was our great prose-minstrel mourned by nations, and buried with kings? Not merely because of that genius, prolific as Nature herself, we might almost say, in types of character, and aspects of life, whom for this sufficient reason, we dare to name in connection with the great romancer of the North, but because he vindicated humanity, not against its Maker, but against itself; because he took the part of his frail, erring, sorrowing, dying fellow-creature, with a voice that touched the heart as no other had done since the Scotch peasant was laid down to slumber in the soil his song had hallowed.

MECHANISM IN THOUGHT AND MORALS.

FEBRUARY 8.

Never was there such a pawn-shop for poets to borrow from as the Anatomy of Melancholy. Byron knew this well, and tells the world as much. . . . I do not believe there is any living author who will not find that he is represented in his predecessors, if he will hunt for himself in Burton. . . . Even the puns and quibbles we have thought our own we are startled to find in these pages which take, not the bread out of our mouths, perhaps, but at least the Attic salt which was the seasoning of our discourse.

PILLOW-SMOOTHING AUTHORS.

FEBRUARY 9.

One who means to talk with entire sincerity always feels himself in danger of two things, namely, — an affectation of bluntness, like that of which Cornwall accuses Kent in “Lear,” and actual rudeness.

What a man wants to do, in talking with a stranger, is to get and to give as much of the best and most real life that belong to the two talkers as the time will let him. Life is short, and conversation apt to run to mere words.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 10.

Poor, dear Charles Lamb, — we can hardly withhold the pitying epithet, since the rough Scotchman brought up against him, as one of his own kale-pots might have shivered a quaint and precious amphora, — poor, dear Charles, — he did not invent any grand formula, he certainly had not the lever of Archimedes, but he had a personality which was quite apart from that of all average humanity, and he is adopted as one of the pleasantest inmates of memory.

It is enough to say of many men that they are interesting. And we are content to say of many others that they are useful, virtuous, praiseworthy, illustrious, even, by what they have achieved, but *uninteresting*.

AN AFTER-BREAKFAST TALK.

FEBRUARY 11.

What though for months the tranquil dust descends,
Whitening the heads of these mine ancient friends,
While the damp offspring of the modern press
Flaunts on my table with its pictured dress ;
Not less I love each dull familiar face,
Nor less should miss it from the appointed place ;
I snatch the book, along whose burning leaves
His scarlet web our wild romancer weaves,
Yet, while proud Hester's fiery pangs I share,
My old MAGNALIA must be standing *there!*

THE STUDY.

FEBRUARY 12.

Our hearts lie buried in the dust
With him so true and tender,
The patriot's stay, the people's trust,
The shield of the offender.
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.
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.
.
Dear Lord, with pitying eye behold
This martyr generation,
Which thou through trials manifold,
Art showing thy salvation !
O let the blood by murder spilt
Wash out thy stricken children's guilt
And sanctify our nation !

IN MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

FEBRUARY 13.

Reason may be the lever, but sentiment gives you the fulcrum and the place to stand on if you want to move the world. Even "sentimentality," which is sentiment overdone, is better than that affectation of superiority to human weakness which is only tolerable as one of the stage properties of full-blown dandyism, and is, at best, but half-blown cynicism.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

In spite of all that Time is bringing, —

Treasures of truth and miracles of art,

Beauty and Love will keep the poet singing,

And song still live, — the science of the heart.

THE COMING ERA.



FEBRUARY 14.

On the 14th of February the windows fill with pictures for the most part odious, and meant for some nondescript class of males and females, their allusions having reference to Saint Valentine's day, the legendary pairing time of the birds. The festival is a sad mockery, for there are no spring birds here to pair, but it reminds us that there is a good time coming.

THE SEASONS.

FEBRUARY 15.

Ye go to bear the saving word
To tribes unnamed and shores untrod :
Heed well the lessons ye have heard
From those old teachers taught of God.

Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And Heaven's eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways.

ROBINSON OF LEYDEN.

FEBRUARY 16.

Our reverence becomes more worthy, or, if you will, less unworthy of its Infinite Object in proportion as our intelligence is lifted and expanded to a higher and broader understanding of the Divine methods of action. BORDER LINES OF KNOWLEDGE.

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame !

A SUN-DAY HYMN.

FEBRUARY 17.

To study nature without fear is possible, but without reproach, impossible. The man who worships in the temple of knowledge must carry his arms with him as our Puritan fathers had to do when they gathered in their first rude meeting-houses.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Every real thought on every real subject knocks the wind out of somebody or other. As soon as his breath comes back, he very probably begins to expend it in hard words. These are the best evidence a man can have that he has said something it was time to say.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 18.

He at whose word the orb that bore him shivered
To find her central sovereignty disowned,
While the wan lips of priest and pontiff quivered,
Their jargon stilled, their Baal disenthroned.

A WELCOME TO DR. B. A. GOULD.

Bankrupt! our pockets inside out!
Empty of words to speak his praises! . . .
Yet why with flowery speeches tease,
With vain superlatives distress him?
Has language better words than these?

THE FRIEND OF ALL HIS RACE, GOD BLESS
HIM!

TO GEORGE PEABODY.

FEBRUARY 19.

So full on life her magic mirror shone,
Her sister Arts paid tribute to her throne;
One reared her temple, one her canvas warmed,
And music thrilled, while Eloquence informed.
The weary rustic left his stunted task
For smiles and tears, the dagger and the mask;
The sage, turned scholar, half forgot his lore,
To be the woman he despised before;
O'er sense and thought she threw her golden chain,
And Time, the anarch, spares her deathless reign.

POETRY.

FEBRUARY 20.

Among living people none remain so long unchanged as the actors. The graveyard and the stage are pretty much the only places where you can expect to find your friends as you left them, five and twenty or fifty years ago. — I have noticed, I may add, that old theatre-goers bring back the past with their stories more vividly than men with any other experiences.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Children of later growth, we love the PLAY,
We love its heroes, be they grave or gay,
Adore its heroines, these immortal dames,
Time's only rivals, whom he never tames.

OPENING OF THE FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE.

FEBRUARY 21.

All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy. Do you suppose our dear *didascolos* over there ever read *Poli Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli Lexicon*, while he was growing up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated through the bat's handle in the Arabian story.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 22.

Welcome to the day returning,
Dearer still as ages flow,
While the torch of Faith is burning,
Long as Freedom's altars glow!
See the hero whom it gave us
Slumbering on a mother's breast;
For the arm he stretched to save us,
Be its morn forever blest!

ODE FOR WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY.

New England's home-bred scholar, well you knew
Her soil, her speech, her people, through and
through,
And loved them ever with the love that holds
All sweet, fond memories in its fragrant folds.

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

FEBRUARY 23.

Youthful extravagance — the untamed enthusiasm which is the source of all great thoughts and deeds, — a beautiful delirium which age commonly tames down, and for which the cold shower-bath the world furnishes *gratis* proves a pretty certain cure.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

The voices of morning ! how sweet is their thrill
When the shadows have turned, and the evening
grows still !

The text of our lives may get wiser with age,
But the print was so fair on its twentieth page !

OUR INDIAN SUMMER.

FEBRUARY 24.

There are three young men in history whose names always present themselves to me in a special companionship : Pico della Mirandola, "The Phoenix of the Age" for his contemporaries ; "The Admirable Crichton," accepting as true the accounts which have come down to us of his wonderful accomplishments ; and Sidney, the Bayard of England. . . . The English paragon of excellence was but thirty-two years old when he was slain at Zutphen, the Italian Phoenix but thirty-one when he was carried off by a fever, and the Scotch prodigy of gifts and attainments was only twenty-two when he was assassinated by his worthless pupil.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

FEBRUARY 25.

A warm day in December is a memory of October; a warm day in February is a dream of April. Their character is unmistakable; we cannot help going back in imagination with the one, and forward with the other.

THE SEASONS.

A mellowing rigorist is always a much pleasanter object to contemplate than a tightening liberal, as a cold day warming up to 32° Fahrenheit is much more agreeable than a warm one chilling down to the same temperature.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



FEBRUARY 26.

Nature gets us out of youth into manhood as sailors are hurried on board of vessels,—in a state of intoxication. We are hustled into maturity reeling with our passions and imagination, and we have drifted far away from port before we awake out of our illusions. But to carry us out of maturity into old age, without our knowing where we are going she drugs us with strong opiates, and so we stagger along with wide-open eyes that see nothing until snow enough has fallen on our heads to rouse our comatose brains out of their stupid trances.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 27.

Modest he seems, not shy ; content to wait
Amid the noisy clamor of debate
The looked-for moment when a peaceful word
Smooths the rough ripples louder tongues have
stirred.

In every tone I mark his tender grace
And all his poems hinted in his face ;
What tranquil joy his friendly presence gives !

AT THE SATURDAY CLUB.

Ah, gentlest soul ! how gracious, how benign
Breathes through our troubled life that voice of
thine,

Filled with a sweetness born of happier spheres,
That wins and warms, that kindles, softens, cheers,
That calms the wildest woe and stays the bitterest
tears !

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW.

FEBRUARY 28.

All generous companies of artists, authors, philanthropists, men of science, are, or ought to be, Societies of Mutual Admiration. A man of genius, or any kind of superiority, is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even associate together and continue to think highly of each other. And so of a dozen such men, if any one place is fortunate enough to hold so many. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

FEBRUARY 29.

O my lost beauty ! — hast thou folded quite
Thy wings of morning light
Beyond those iron gates
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits
To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy
streams ?

Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,
Whose flowers are silvered hair !
Have I not loved thee long,
Though my young lips have often done thee wrong,
And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless
song ?
Ah, wilt thou yet return,
Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar
burn ?

MUSA.

March.

AT MY FIRESIDE.

ALONE, beneath the darkened sky,
With saddened heart and unstrung lyre,
I heap the spoils of years gone by,
And leave them with a long-drawn sigh,
Like drift-wood brands that glimmering lie,
Before the ashes hide the fire.

Let not these slow declining days
The rosy light of dawn outlast;
Still round my lonely hearth it plays,
And gilds the east with borrowed rays,
While memory's mirrored sunset blaze
Flames on the windows of the past.

March 1, 1888.

MARCH 1.

And these were they who gave us birth,
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,
Who won for us this virgin earth,
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine, —
In alien earth the exiles lie, —
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,
His words our noblest battle-cry!

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea!
Ye *have* not built by Haerlem Meer,
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder-Zee!

ROBINSON OF LEYDEN.



MARCH 2.

One must go to the country to find people who are constantly enough in the midst of the sights and sounds of the opening year to take cognizance of the order of that grand procession, with March blowing his trumpet at the head of it, and April following with her green flag, and the rest coming in their turn, till February brings up the rear with his white banner.

THE SEASONS.

The silent changes of the rolling years,
Marked on the soil, or dialled on the spheres.

POETRY.

MARCH 3.

This noble language which we have inherited from our English fathers. Language ! — the blood of the soul, into which our thoughts run and out of which they grow !

The English language was wound up to run some thousands of years, I trust ; but if everybody is to be pulling at everything he thinks is a *hair*, our grandchildren will have to make the discovery that it is a *hair-spring* and the old Anglo-Norman soul's-timekeeper will run down, as so many other dialects have done before it.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 4.

We all have to assume a standard of judgment in our own minds, either of things or persons. A man who is willing to take another's opinion has to exercise his judgment in the choice of whom to follow, which is often as nice a matter as to judge of things for one's self.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

They little know the tidal movements of national thought and feeling, who believe that they depend for existence on a few swimmers who ride their waves. It is not Leviathan that leads the ocean from continent to continent, but the ocean which bears his mighty bulk as it wafts its own bubbles.

THE INEVITABLE TRIAL.

MARCH 5.

Did you ever see that electrical experiment which consists in passing a flash through letters of gold leaf in a darkened room, whereupon some name or legend springs out of the darkness in characters of fire?

There are songs all written out in my soul which I could read, if the flash might pass through them, — but the fire must come down from heaven.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MARCH 6.

A creating and informing spirit, which is with us and not of us, is recognized everywhere in real and in storied life. It is the Muse of Homer; it is the Daimon of Socrates; it is the inspiration of the seer; it shaped the forms that filled the soul of Michael Angelo when he saw the figure of the great Lawgiver in the yet unhewn marble, and the dome of the world's yet unbuilt basilica against the blank horizon; it comes to the least of us as a voice that will be heard; it frames our sentences; it lends a sudden gleam of sense or eloquence to the dullest of us all, so that we wonder at ourselves, or rather not at ourselves, but at this divine visitor, who chooses our brain as his dwelling-place, and invests our naked thought with the purple of the kings of speech or song.

MECHANISM IN THOUGHT AND MORALS.

MARCH 7.

I never saw an author in my life — saving, perhaps, one — that did not purr as audibly as a full-grown domestic cat (*Felis Catus*, LINN.), on having his fur smoothed in the right way by a skilful hand.

But let me give you a caution. Be very careful how you tell an author he is *droll*. Ten to one he will hate you. . . . Say you *cried* over his romance or his verses, and he will love you and send you a copy. You can laugh over that as much as you like — in private.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 8.

When you pay a compliment to an author, don't qualify it in the next sentence so as to take all the goodness out of it, . . . and be careful to assure yourself that the person you are talking with wrote the article or book you praise. It is not very pleasant to be told, "Well, there now! I always liked your writings, but you never did anything half so good as this last piece," and then to have to tell the blunderer that this last piece is n't yours, but t'other man's.

Take care that the phrase or sentence you commend is not one that is in quotation-marks. The pearl upon the Ethiop's arm is very pretty in verse, but one does not care to furnish the dark background for other persons' jewelry.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 9.

Because a man does not say much, it does not follow that he may not have an exalted and intense inner life. I have known a number of cases where a man who seemed thoroughly commonplace and unemotional has all at once surprised everybody by telling the story of his hidden life far more pointedly and dramatically than any playwright or novelist or poet could have told it for him.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 10.

I'll tell you who I think are the best talkers in all probability, — poets who never write verses. And there are a good many more of these than it would seem at first sight. I think you may say every young lover is a poet, to begin with. I don't mean either that *all* young lovers are good talkers; but a little talk goes a good way in most of these cooing matches, and it would n't do to report them too literally. What I mean is that a man with the gift of musical and impassioned phrase (and love often lends that to a young person for a while), who "wreaks" it, to borrow Byron's word, on conversation as the natural outlet of his sensibilities and spiritual activities, is likely to talk better than the poet, who plays on the instrument of verse. A great pianist or violinist is rarely a great singer.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 11.

He must be a poor creature that does not often repeat himself. Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice, "Know thyself," never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence! Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven its first nail?

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 12.

There are about as many twins in the births of thought as of children. For the first time in your lives you learn some fact or come across some idea. Within an hour, a day, a week, that same fact or idea strikes you from another quarter. It seems as if it had passed into space and bounded back upon you as an echo from the blank wall that shuts in the world of thought. Yet no possible connection exists between the two channels by which the thought or the fact arrived.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

A thought is often original though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of associations.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 13.

In Italy, the works of mediæval Art seem to be of yesterday, — Rome is but an intruding new-comer, as we contemplate her in the shadow of the Cyclopean walls of Fiesole or Volterra. It makes a man human to live on these old humanized soils. He cannot help marching in step with his kind in the rear of such a procession.

They say a dead man's hand cures swellings, if laid on them. There is nothing like the dead cold hand of the Past to take down our tumid egotism and lead us into the solemn flow of the life of our race. Rousseau came out of one of his sad self-torturing fits, as he cast his eye on the arches of the old Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MARCH 14.

If Switzerland touched the deepest chord in my consciousness, a solemn bass note which Nature had never before set in vibration, Italy reached a string which returned a keener and higher note than any to which my inward sense had before responded. Italy, more especially Rome, leaves after it an infinite longing which haunts the soul forever.

A PROSPECTIVE VISIT.

In the smile of those blue-vaulted skies,
Earth's fairest dome of all divinest art.

AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY.

MARCH 15.

Our houses shape themselves palpably on our inner and outer natures. See a householder breaking up and you will be sure of it. There is a shell-fish which builds all manner of smaller shells into the walls of its own. A house is never home until we have crusted it with the spoils of a hundred lives besides those of our own past. See what these are and you can tell what the occupant is.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 16.

The worst of a modern mansion is that it has no place for ghosts. I watched one building not long since. It had no proper garret, to begin with, only a sealed interval between the roof and attics, where a spirit could not be accommodated unless it were flattened out like Ravel, Brother, after the millstone had fallen on him. There was not a nook or a corner in the whole house fit to lodge any respectable ghost, for every part was as open to observation as a literary man's character and condition, his figure and estate, his coat and his countenance, are to his (or her) Bohemian Majesty on a tour of inspection through his (or her) subjects' keyholes.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 17.

Every person's feelings have a front-door and a side-door by which they may be entered. The front door is on the street. Some keep it always open; some keep it latched; some, locked; some, bolted, — with a chain that will let you peep in, but not get in; and some nail it up, so that nothing can pass its threshold. This front-door leads into a passage which opens into an anteroom, and this into the interior apartments. The side-door opens at once into the sacred chambers.

There is almost always at least one key to this side-door. This is carried for years hidden in a mother's bosom. Fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends, often, but by no means so universally, have duplicates of it. The wedding-ring conveys a right to one; alas, if none is given with it!

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 18.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath
Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves;
And not that other self which nods and smiles
And babbles in our name; the one is Prayer,
Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue
That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven;
The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web
Around our naked speech and makes it bold.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

MARCH 19.

The brain is the palest of all the internal organs, and the heart the reddest. Whatever comes from the brain carries the hue of the place it came from, and whatever comes from the heart carries the heat and color of its birthplace.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Snows were melting down the vale,
And Earth unlaced her icy mail,
And March his stormy trumpet blew;
And tender green came peeping through.

AFTER A LECTURE ON KEATS.

MARCH 20.

The last we see of snow is, in the language of a native poet,

“The lingering drift behind the shady wall.”

This is from a bard more celebrated once than now, Timothy Dwight. . . . The line with the drift in it has stuck in my memory like a feather in an old nest, and is all that remains to me of his “Greenfield Hill.”

When there is nothing left of the winter snow but these ridges behind the stone walls, and a dingy drift here and there in a hollow, or in the woods, Winter has virtually resigned the icicle which is his sceptre. It only remains to break the seals which are the warrants of his hitherto undisputed reign.

THE SEASONS.

MARCH 21.

Its utterance rises through all the gamut of Nature's multitudinous voices, and has a note for all her outward sounds and inward moods. It imitates all instruments; it cheats the listener with the sound of singing choirs. Within its breast all the passions of humanity seem to reign in turn. It moans with the dull ache of grief, and cries with the sudden thrill of pain; it sighs, it shouts, it laughs, it exults, it wails, it pleads, it trembles, it shudders, it threatens, it storms, it rages, it is soothed, it slumbers.

Such is the organ, man's nearest approach to the creation of a true organism.

THE GREAT INSTRUMENT.



MARCH 22.

An author may interest his public by his work, or by his personality, or by both. A great mathematician or metaphysician may be lost sight of in his own intellectual wealth, as a great capitalist becomes at last the mere appendage of his far more important millions. There is, on the other hand, a class of writers whose individuality is the one thing we care about. The world could get along without their help, but it wants their company. We are not so very curious about the details of the life of Gauss, but we do want to know a good deal about Richter.

AN AFTER-BREAKFAST TALK.

MARCH 23.

Every poem has a soul and a body, and it is the body of it, or the copy, that men read and publishers pay for. The soul of it is born in an instant in the poet's soul. It comes to him a thought, tangled in the meshes of a few sweet words, — words that have loved each other from the cradle of the language, but have never been wedded until now. Whether it will ever fully embody itself in a bridal train of a dozen stanzas or not is uncertain but it exists potentially from the instant that the poet turns pale with it.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 24.

He sings no more on earth ; our vain desire
Aches for the voice we loved so long to hear
In Dorian flute-notes breathing soft and clear, —
The sweet contralto that could never tire.
Deafened with listening to a harsher strain,
The Mænad's scream, the stark barbarian's cry,
Still for those soothing, loving tones we sigh ;
Oh, for our vanished Orpheus once again !
The shadowy silence hears us call in vain !
His lips are hushed ; his song shall never die.

OUR DEAD SINGER. H. W. L.

March 24, 1882.

MARCH 25.

Beware of making your moral staple consist of the negative virtues. It is good to abstain, and teach others to abstain, from all that is sinful or hurtful. But making a business of it leads to emaciation of character, unless one feeds largely also on the more nutritious diet of active sympathetic benevolence.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 26.

Of the noted men of Andover the one whom I remember best was Professor Moses Stuart. . . . I have seen few more striking figures in my life than his. Tall, lean, with strong, bold features, a keen, scholarly, accipitrine nose, thin, expressive lips, great solemnity and impressiveness of voice and manner, he was my early model of a classic orator. His air was Roman, and his *toga*,—that is, his broadcloth cloak—was carried on his arm, with such a statue-like rigid grace that he might have been turned into marble as he stood, and looked noble by the side of the antiques of the Vatican.

CINDERS FROM THE ASHES.

The grave scholar, lonely, calm, austere,
Whose voice like music charmed the listening ear,
Whose light rekindled, like the morning-star
Still shines upon us through the gates ajar.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

MARCH 27.

Among my visits was one never to be renewed and never to be forgotten. It was to the Master of Trinity, the Reverend William Hepworth Thompson. I hardly expected to have the privilege of meeting this very distinguished and greatly beloved personage, famous not alone for scholarship, or as the successor of Dr. Whewell in his high office, but also as having said some of the wittiest things which we have heard since Voltaire's *pour encourager les autres*. . . . Gentle, dignified, kindly in his address as if I had been his schoolmate, he left a very charming impression. . . . I had been just in time to see "the last of the great men" at Cambridge.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

MARCH 28.

Two and two do not always make four, in the matter of hereditary descent of qualities. Sometimes they make three, and sometimes five. It seems as if the parental traits at one time showed separate, at another blended,—that occasionally the force of two natures is represented in the derivative one by a diagonal of greater value than either original line of living movement,—that sometimes there is a loss of vitality hardly to be accounted for, and again a forward impulse of variable intensity in some new unforeseen direction.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 29.

The property of an author does not consist, for the most part, of what is called real, or what is called personal estate, but lies chiefly in that immaterial and intangible possession known in its general expression as *time*. . . . His clock will be found to mark and measure sixty minutes to the hour, and *no more*, like the timepieces of other owners; which fact is contrary to the apparent belief of many of his visitors and correspondents.

AN AFTER-BREAKFAST TALK.

Shun such as lounge through afternoons and eves
And on thy dial write, "Beware of thieves!"
Felon of minutes, never taught to feel
The worth of treasures which thy fingers steal,
Pick my left pocket of the silver dime,
But spare the right, — it holds my golden time!

A RHYMED LESSON.



MARCH 30.

The inner world of thought and the outer world of events are alike in this that they are both brimful. There is no space between consecutive thoughts, or between the ever-ending series of actions. All pack tight, and mould their surfaces against each other, so that in the long run there is a wonderful average uniformity in the forms of both thoughts and actions.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MARCH 31.

His mind coupled remote ideas in a very singular way. Sometimes it was imagination, glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; sometimes fancy, sparkling like a firefly one moment here, the next there; sometimes wit, flashing from the sudden collision of two thoughts that met like flint and steel; less frequently humor, for humor is fire in damp tinder, and burns too slowly for the swift impatience of quick kindling intelligences. . . .

It was vigorous exercise to talk with him when his fancy was in its incandescent and scintillating mood. The fastest conversational roadster found him a running mate hard to keep up with. . . . Whether his own brain ever rested or wanted rest those who never remember a dull moment in his company might well question. . . .

To recall this friend who has left our companionship must be to many of us one of the sweetest pleasures of memory. THOMAS GOLD APPLETON.

April.

The sunbeams, lost for half a year,
Slant through my pane their morning rays ;
For dry northwesterners cold and clear,
The east blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen.
Then close against the sheltering wall
The tulip's horn of dusky green,
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns ;
The long narcissus-blades appear ;
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns
To light her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung
By the wild winds of gusty March,
With willow leaflets lightly strung,
Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robed their slender spray
With full-blown flower and embryo leaf ;
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day
Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

THE SPRING HAS COME.

APRIL 1.

Winter is past ; the heart of Nature warms
Beneath the wrecks of unresisted storms ;
Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,
The southern slopes are fringed with tender green.

SPRING.

There is nothing that makes the seasons and the year so interesting as to watch and especially to keep record of the changes by which Nature marks the ebb and flow of the great ocean of sunshine which overspreads the earth.

THE SEASONS.



APRIL 2.

In order to know whether a human being is young or old, offer it food of different kinds at short intervals. If young it will eat anything at any hour of the day or night. If old it observes stated periods, and you might as well attempt to regulate the time of high-water to suit a fishing-party as to change these periods.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

We must have a weak spot or two in a character before we can love it much. People that do not laugh or cry, or take more of anything than is good for them, or use anything but dictionary words, are admirable subjects for biographies. But we don't always care most for those flat-pattern flowers that press best in the herbarium.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 3.

Herbert's life as pictured by Izaak Walton is, to borrow one of his own lines,

“A box where sweets compacted lie ;”

and I felt, as I left his little chapel and his parsonage, as a pilgrim might feel who had just left the holy places at Jerusalem.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

The poet and romancer give back more than they borrow from the scenes which lend them their inspiration. What was this broad stream that runs by your walls before it was peopled by the creative touch of your story-teller's imagination. It is no longer Hudson's river, — it is Irving's. Blessed be the memory of the writer who helped to teach us that we have a country, and showed us that we were to have a literature of our own.

IRVING'S POWER OF IDEALIZATION.

APRIL 4.

For him the Architect of all
Unroofed our planet's starlit hall ;
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.

BENJAMIN PEIRCE.

True to all Truth the world denies,
Not tongue-tied for its gilded sin ;
Not always right in all men's eyes,
But faithful to the light within.

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE. J. F. C.

APRIL 5.

Did you ever read old Daddy Gilpin? Slowest of men, even of English men; yet delicious in his slowness, as is the light of a sleepy eye in woman. I always supposed "Dr. Syntax" was written to make fun of him. I have a whole set of his works, and am very proud of it, with its gray paper, and open type, and long ff, and orange-juice landscapes. The *Père* Gilpin had the kind of science I like in the study of Nature, — a little less observation than White of Selborne, but a little more poetry.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 6.

Nature is fond of what are called "gift-enterprises." This little book of life which she has given into the hands of its joint possessors is commonly one of the old story-books bound over again. Only once in a great while there is a stately poem in it, or its leaves are illuminated with the glories of art.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

I was born and bred among books and those who knew what was in books. I was carefully instructed in things temporal and spiritual. But up to a considerable maturity of childhood I believed Raphael and Michael Angelo to have been superhuman beings.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 7.

Come, take the book we love so well,
And let us read and dream
We see whate'er its pages tell,
And sail an English stream.

Up to the clouds the lark has sprung,
Still trilling as he flies ;
The linnet sings as there he sung ;
The unseen cuckoo cries,

And daisies strew the banks along,
And yellow kingcups shine,
With cowslips, and a primrose throng,
And humble celandine.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.



APRIL 8.

We, like the leaf, the summit, or the wave,
Reflect the light our common nature gave,
But every sunbeam, falling from her throne,
Wears on our hearts some coloring of our own.

POETRY.

All that clothes a man, even to the blue sky
which caps his head, — a little loosely, — shapes
itself to fit each particular being beneath it. Farmers,
sailors, astronomers, poets, lovers, all find it
different, according to the eyes with which they
severally look.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 9.

On sheltered banks, beneath the dripping eaves,
Spring's earliest nurslings spread their glowing
leaves,

Bright with the hues from wider pictures won,
White, azure, golden, — drift, or sky, or sun, —
The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast
The frozen trophy torn from Winter's crest ;
The violet, gazing on the arch of blue
Till her own iris wears its deepened hue ;
The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering with his cup of gold.

SPRING.

APRIL 10.

There are minds with large ground-floors, that
can store an infinite amount of knowledge ; some
librarians, for instance, who know enough of books
to help other people, without being able to make
much other use of their knowledge, have intellects
of this class. Your great working lawyer has two
spacious stories ; his mind is clear, because his
mental floors are large, and he has room to ar-
range his thoughts so that he can get at them, —
facts below, principles above, and all in ordered
series ; poets are often narrow below, incapable of
clear statement, and with small power of consec-
utive reasoning, but full of light, if sometimes
rather bare of furniture, in the attics.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 11.

Earth, air, sea, sky, the elemental fire,
Art, history, song, — what meanings lie in each
Found in his cunning hand a stringless lyre,
And poured their mingling music through his
speech.

Thence flowed those anthems of our festal days,
Whose ravishing division held apart
The lips of listening throngs in sweet amaze,
Moved in all breasts the self-same human heart.

Subdued his accents, as of one who tries
To press some care, some haunting sadness
down ;
His smile half shadow ; and to stranger eyes
The kingly forehead wore an iron crown.

EDWARD EVERETT.

APRIL 12.

The longer I live, the more I am satisfied of two things : first, that the truest lives are those that are cut rose-diamond-fashion, with many facets answering to the many-planed aspects of the world about them ; secondly, that society is always trying in some way or other to grind us down to a single flat surface. It is hard work to resist this grinding-down action.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 13.

I find that there is a very prevalent opinion among the dwellers on the shores of Sir Isaac Newton's Ocean of Truth, that *salt fish*, which have been taken from it a good while ago, split open, cured and dried, are the only proper and allowable food for reasonable people. I maintain, on the other hand, that there are a number of live fish still swimming in it, and that every one of us has a right to see if he cannot catch some of them.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



APRIL 14.

O who forgets when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought?

I AM; — I LIVE. The mystery and the fear
When the dread question, WHAT HAS BROUGHT
ME HERE?

Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun!

A RHYMED LESSON.

No "shoulder-striker" hits out straighter than a child with its logic. Why, I can remember lying in my bed in the nursery and settling questions which all that I have heard since and got out of books has never been able to raise again.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 15.

Did not my own consciousness migrate, or seem, at least, to transfer itself into this brilliant life history, as I traced its glowing record? I, too, seemed to feel the delight of carrying with me, as if they were my own, the charms of a presence which made its own welcome everywhere. I shared his heroic toils, I partook of his literary and social triumphs, I was honored by the marks of distinction which gathered about him, I was wronged by the indignity from which he suffered and mourned with him in his sorrow.

THE NEW PORTFOLIO.

APRIL 16.

The long roll of glowing tapestry he has woven for us, with all its life-like portraits, its almost moving pageants, its sieges where we can see the artillery flashing, its battle-fields with their smoke and fire, — pictures which cannot fade and which will preserve his name interwoven with their own enduring colors.

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed!

From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!

Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp
with his broom!

A PARTING HEALTH.

J. L. M.

APRIL 17.

The laboring classes, — so called in distinction from the idle people who only contrive the machinery and discover the processes and lay out the work and draw the charts and organize the various movements which keep the world going and make it tolerable. The organ-blower works harder with his muscles, for that matter, than the organ-player, and may perhaps be exasperated into thinking himself a downtrodden martyr because he does not receive the same pay for his services.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



APRIL 18.

That *but for this* our souls were free,
And *but for that* our lives were blest ;
That in some season yet to be
Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain, —
Some common ailment of the race, —
Though doctors think the matter plain, —
That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when like babes with fingers burned
We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
And men are wiser than before.

WHAT WE ALL THINK.

APRIL 19.

True to their home, these faithful arms shall toil
To crown with peace their own untainted soil ;
And true to God, to freedom, to mankind, . . .
These stately forms, that bending even now
Bowed their strong manhood to the humble
 plough,
Shall rise erect, the guardians of the land,
The same stern iron in the same right hand.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

APRIL 20.

Thou who hast taught the teachers of mankind
How from the least of things the mightiest grow,
What marvel jealous Nature made thee blind,
Lest man should learn what angels long to know ?
Thou in the flinty rock, the river's flow,
In the thick-moted sunbeam's sifted light
Hast trained thy downward-pointed tube to show
Worlds within worlds unveiled to mortal sight.
Ah, happy they to whom the joys belong
Of peaceful triumphs that can never die
From History's record, — not of gilded wrong,
But golden truths that while the world goes by
With all its empty pageant, blazoned high
Around the Master's name forever shine !
So shines thy name illumined in the sky, —
Such joys, such triumphs, such remembrance
thine ! TO CHRISTIAN GOTTFRIED EHRENBURG.

APRIL 21.

Swelled with new life, the darkening elm on high
Prints her thick buds against the spotted sky ;
On all her boughs the stately chestnut cleaves
The gummy shroud that wraps her embryo leaves ;
The house-fly, stealing from his narrow grave,
Drugged with the opiate that November gave,
Beats with faint wing against the sunny pane,
Or crawls, tenacious, o'er its lucid plain ;
From shaded chinks of lichen-crustcd walls,
In languid curves, the gliding serpent crawls ;
The bog's green harper, thawing from his sleep,
Twangs a hoarse note and tries a shortened leap ;
On floating rails that face the softening noons
The still shy turtles range their dark platoons,
Or, toiling aimless o'er the mellowing fields,
Trail through the grass their tessellated shields.

SPRING.



APRIL 22.

Inasmuch as religion and law and the whole social order of civilized society, to say nothing of literature and art, are so founded on and pervaded by sentiment that they would all go to pieces without it, it is a word not to be used too lightly in passing judgment, as if it were an element to be thrown out or treated with small consideration.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 23.

With no vain praise we mock the stone-carved
name

Stamped once on dust that moved with pulse
and breath,

As thinking to enlarge that amplest fame

Whose undimmed glories gild the night of
death.

SHAKESPEARE.

I think most readers of Shakespeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted mental conditions like those produced by music. Then they may drop the book, to pass at once into the region of thought without words. We may happen to be very dull folks, you and I ; . . . but we get glimpses now and then of a sphere of spiritual possibilities, where we, dull as we are now, may sail in vast circles round the largest compass of earthly intelligence.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 24.

Land of our fathers, ocean makes us two,

But heart to heart is true !

Proud is your towering daughter in the West,

Yet in her burning life-blood reign confest

Her mother's pulses beating in her breast.

This holy fount, whose rills from heaven descend,

Its gracious drops shall lend, —

Both foreheads bathed in that baptismal dew,

And love make one the old home and the new !

FOUNTAIN AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

APRIL 25.

I opened it [The Christian Year] to the *Fourth Sunday in Lent*, and read that angelic poem, sweeter than anything I can remember since Xavier's "My God, I love thee." — I am not a Churchman, but such a poem as "The Rosebud" makes one's heart a proselyte to the culture it grows from. Talk about it as much as you like, — one's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion. A man should be a gentleman in his hymns and prayers ; the fondness for "scenes," among vulgar saints, contrasts so meanly with that:

"God only and good angels look
Behind the blissful scene."

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 26.

Wild flowers are opening fast ; the leaves are springing bright green upon the currant bushes ; dark, almost livid upon the lilac ; the grass is growing apace, the plants are coming up in the garden beds, and the children are thinking of May-day.

THE SEASONS.

We have trod from the threshold of turbulent
March,

Till the green scarf of April is hung on the larch,
And down the bright hillside that welcomes the day,
We hear the warm panting of beautiful May.

CLOSE OF A COURSE OF LECTURES.

APRIL 27.

A mightier Orpheus strains the whispering wire,
Whose lightning thrills the lazy winds outrun
And hold the hours as Joshua stayed the sun, —
So swift, in truth, we hardly find a place
For those dim fictions known as time and space.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

The smallest fibres weave the strongest bands; —
In narrowest tubes the sovereign nerves are
spun, —

A little cord along the deep sea-sands
Makes the live thought of severed nations one.

TO CHRISTIAN GOTTFRIED EHRENBURG.

APRIL 28.

Those who have been born into the inheritance of the new civilization feel very differently about it from those who have lived their way into it. To the young and those approaching middle age all these innovations in life and thought are as natural, as much a matter of course, as the air they breathe; they form a part of the inner framework of their intelligence, about which their mental life is organized. To men and women of more than threescore and ten they are external accretions, like the shell of a mollusk, the jointed plates of an articulate.

A PROSPECTIVE VISIT.

APRIL 29.

Men's minds are like the pieces on a chess-board in their way of moving. One mind creeps from the square it is on to the next, straight forward, like the pawns. Another sticks close to its own line of thought and follows it as far as it goes, with no heed for others' opinions, as the bishop sweeps the board in the line of his own color. And another class of minds break through everything that lies before them, ride over argument and opposition, and go to the end of the board, like the castle.

But there is still another sort of intellect which is very apt to jump over the thought that stands next and come down in the unexpected way of the knight. But that same knight will contrive to get on to every square of the board in a series of moves that looks like a pattern of embroidery, and so these zigzagging minds will sooner or later get back to the square next the one they started from.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

APRIL 30.

At last young April, ever frail and fair,
Woody by her playmate with the golden hair,
Chased to the margin of receding floods
O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds,
In tears and blushes sighs herself away,
And hides her cheek beneath the flowers of May.

SPRING.

May.

Clear the brown path, to meet his coulter's gleam !
Lo ! on he comes, behind his smoking team,
With toil's bright dew-drops on his sun-burnt
brow,

The lord of earth, the hero of the plough !

First in the field before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done,
Line after line, along the bursting sod,
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod ;
Still, where he treads, the stubborn clods divide,
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide ;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves ; . . .
At every turn the loosening chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labor brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings ;
This is the page, whose letters shall be seen
Changed by the sun to words of living green ;
This is the scholar whose immortal pen
Spells the first lesson hunger taught to men.

THE PLOUGHMAN

MAY 1.

Wild filly from the mountain side,
Doomed to the close and chafing thills,
Lend me thy long, untiring stride
To seek with thee thy western hills!

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,
The thrush's trill, the robin's cry,
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing
That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

O for one spot of living green, —
One little spot where leaves can grow, —
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,
To dream above, to sleep below!

SPRING HAS COME.



MAY 2.

The flowering month of the orchard. As the
warmth flows northward like a great wave, it cov-
ers the land with an ever-spreading flood of pink
and white blossoms.

THE SEASONS.

Why dream I here within these caging walls,
Deaf to her voice, while blooming Nature calls;
Peering and gazing with insatiate looks
Through blinding lenses, or in wearying books?

SPRING.

Palfrey, ordained in varied walks to shine,
Statesman, historian, critic, and divine.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

MAY 3.

You don't know what I mean by the *green state*? Well, then, I will tell you. Certain things are good for nothing until they have been kept a long while; and some are good for nothing until they have been long kept and *used*. Of the first, wine is the illustrious and immortal example. Of those which must be kept and used I will name three, — meerschäum pipes, violins, and poems.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MAY 4.

Even so late as less than half a century ago this region of Boston was still a most attractive little *rus in urbe*. Sunny gardens opened their flowers and ripened their fruits in the places now occupied by great warehouses. The most aristocratic pears, the "Saint Michael," the "Brown Bury," found their natural homes in these sheltered inclosures. The fine old mansion of Judge William Prescott looked out upon these gardens. Some of us can well remember the window of his son's, the historian's, study, the light from which used every evening to glimmer through the leaves of the pear-trees while "The Conquest of Mexico" was achieving itself under difficulties hardly less formidable than those encountered by Cortes.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

MAY 5.

A great calamity is as old as the trilobites an hour after it has happened. It stains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blot of tears or of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams; in the "dissolving views" of dark day-visions; all omens pointed to it; all paths led to it. After the tossing half-forgetfulness of the first sleep that follows such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again, — old as eternity.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MAY 6.

I am not humble; I was shown my place,
Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand;
Took what she gave, not chose, I know no shame,
No fear for being simply what I am.

I am not proud, I hold my every breath
At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe
Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where;
Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin
A miser reckons, is a special gift
As from an unseen hand.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

MAY 7.

A poem must be kept and used, like a meerschäum, or a violin. A poem is just as porous as the meerschäum ;—the more porous it is the better. I mean to say that a genuine poem is capable of absorbing an indefinite amount of the essence of our own humanity,—its tenderness, its heroism, its regrets, its aspirations, so as to be gradually stained through with a divine secondary color derived from ourselves. So you see it must take time to bring the sentiment of a poem into harmony with our nature, by staining ourselves through every thought and image our being can penetrate.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MAY 8.

When a word comes up fit to end a line with I can *feel* all the rhymes in the language that are fit to go with it without naming them. I have tried them all so many times, I know all the polygamous words and all the monogamous ones, and all the unmarrying ones,—the whole lot that have no mates,—as soon as I hear their names called. Sometimes I run over a string of rhymes, but generally speaking it is strange what a short list it is of those that are good for anything. That is the pitiful side of all rhymed verse.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MAY 9.

Ah, it is the pale passions that are the fiercest,—it is the violence of the chill that gives the measure of the fever! The fighting-boy of our school always turned white when he went out to a pitched battle with the bully of some neighboring village; but we knew what his bloodless cheeks meant,—the blood was all in his stout heart,—he was a slight boy, and there was not enough to redden his face and fill his heart both at once.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MAY 10.

The city slept beneath the moonbeam's glance,
Her white walls gleaming through the vines of
France,
And all was hushed, save where the footsteps fell,
On some high tower, of midnight sentinel.
But one still watched; no self-encircled woes
Chased from his lids the angel of repose;
He watched, he wept, for thoughts of bitter years
Bowed his dark lashes, wet with burning tears;
His country's sufferings and her children's shame
Streamed o'er his memory like a forest's flame;
Each treasured insult, each remembered wrong,
Rolled through his heart and kindled into song;
His taper faded; and the morning gales
Swept through the world the war-song of Mar-
seilles!

POETRY.

MAY 11.

There's so much intelligence about nowadays in books and newspapers and talk that it's mighty hard to write without getting something or other worth listening to into your essay or your volume. The foolishlest book is a kind of leaky boat on a sea of wisdom; some of the wisdom will get in anyhow. Every now and then I find something in my book that seems so good to me, I can't help thinking it must have leaked in. I suppose other people discover that it came through a leak, full as soon as I do.

You must write a book or two to find out how much and how little you know and have to say. Then you must read some notices of it by somebody that loves you and one or two by somebody that hates you. You'll find yourself a very odd piece of property after you've been through these experiences. THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MAY 12.

Once more revived in fancy's magic glass,
I see in state the long procession pass :
Tall, courtly, leader as by right divine,
Winthrop, our Winthrop, rules the marshalled
 line,
Still seen in front, as on that far-off day
His ribboned baton showed the column's way.

THE SECOND CENTENNIAL.

(Poem for the Harvard Anniversary.)

MAY 13.

The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms. Very often it does not know what to do with genius. Talent is a docile creature. It bows its head meekly while the world slips the collar over it. It backs into the shafts like a lamb. It draws its load cheerfully, and is patient of the bit and of the whip. But genius is always impatient of its harness ; its wild blood makes it hard to train.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



MAY 14.

Proud of her clustering spires, her new-built towers,

Our Venice, stolen from the slumbering sea,
A sister's kindest greeting wafts to thee,
Rose of Val d' Arno, Queen of all its flowers !
Thine exile's shrine thy sorrowing love embowers,
Yet none with truer homage bends the knee,
Or stronger pledge of fealty brings than we,
Whose poets make thy dead Immortal ours.
Lonely the height, but ah, to heaven how near !
Dante whence flowed that solemn verse of thine
Like the stern river from its Apennine
Whose name the far-off Scythian thrilled with
fear :

Now to all lands thy deep-toned voice is dear,
And every language knows the Song Divine !

BOSTON TO FLORENCE.

MAY 15.

I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else ; — long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend.

No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain *ultimata* of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MAY 16.

A man's opinions are generally of much more value than his arguments. These last are made by his brain, and perhaps he does not believe the proposition they tend to prove, — as is often the case with paid lawyers ; but opinions are formed by our whole nature, — brain, heart, instinct, brute life, everything all our experience has shaped for us by contact with the whole circle of our being.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MAY 17.

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
Look up to Thee, the Father, — dares to ask
More than Thy wisdom answers. From Thy hand
The worlds were cast ; yet every leaflet claims
From that same hand its little shining sphere
Of star-lit dew ; thine image, the great sun,
Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
Glares in mid-heaven ; but to his noontide blaze
The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
And from his splendor steals its fairest hue,
Its sweetest perfume from the scorching fire.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.



MAY 18.

We are all more or less improvisators. We
all have a double, who is wiser and better than we
are, and who puts thoughts into our heads, and
words into our mouths. Do we not all commune
with our own hearts upon our beds ? Do we not
all divide ourselves, and go to buffets on questions
of right or wrong, of wisdom or folly ? Who or what
is it that resolves the stately parliament of the day,
with all its forms and conventionalities and pre-
tences, and the great Me presiding, into the com-
mittee of the whole, with Conscience in the chair,
that holds its solemn session through the watches
of the night ?

MECHANISM IN THOUGHT AND MORALS.

MAY 19.

These are the pleasant Berkshire hills,
Each with its leafy crown ;
Hark ! from their sides a thousand rills
Come singing sweetly down.

A thousand rills ; they leap and shine,
Strained through the shadowy nooks,
Till, clasped in many a gathering twine,
They swell a hundred brooks.

A hundred brooks and still they run
With ripple, shade, and gleam,
Till, clustering all their braids in one,
They flow a single stream.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

MAY 20.

A very simple *intellectual* mechanism answers the necessities of friendship, and even of the most intimate relations of life. If a watch tells us the hour and minute, we can be content to carry it about with us for a lifetime, though it has no second hand and is not a repeater, nor a musical watch, — though it is not enamelled nor jewelled, — in short, though it has little beyond the wheels required for a trustworthy instrument, added to a good face and a pair of useful hands.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

MAY 21.

Fresh transfused, the Iliad thrills again
From Albion's cliffs as o'er Achaia's plain !
The proud heroic, with its pulse-like beat,
Rings like the cymbals clashing as they meet.

POETRY.



MAY 22.

In Windsor Park . . . was the lovely sight of the *hawthorn* in full bloom. I had always thought of the hawthorn as a pretty shrub, growing in hedges ; as big as a barberry bush, or some humble plant of that character. I was surprised to see it as a tree, standing by itself, and making the most delicious roof a pair of young lovers could imagine to sit under. It looked at a little distance like a young apple-tree covered with new-fallen snow. I shall never see the word hawthorn in poetry again without the image of the snowy but far from chilling canopy rising before me.

In this way it is that the associations with the poetry we remember come up when we find ourselves surrounded by English scenery. The great poets build temples of song, and fill them with images and symbols which move us almost to adoration ; the lesser minstrels fill a panel or gild a cornice here and there, and make our hearts glad with glimpses of beauty.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

MAY 23.

Sitting on the girls' benches, conspicuous by that look which rarely fails to betray hereditary and congenital culture, was a young person very nearly of my own age. This was Margaret Fuller, the only one among us who, like "Jean Paul," like "The Duke," like "Bettina," has slipped the cable of the more distinctive name to which she was anchored, and floats on the waves of speech, as "Margaret." Her air to her schoolmates was marked by a certain stateliness and distance, as if she had other thoughts than theirs and was not of them. . . . Her talk was affluent, magisterial, *de haut en bas*, some would say euphuistic, but surpassing the talk of women in breadth and audacity. Her face kindled and reddened and dilated in every feature as she spoke.

CINDERS FROM THE ASHES.

A woman who is likely to live longer by what is written of her than by anything she ever wrote herself.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

MAY 24.

God bless our Father's Land!
Keep her in heart and hand
One with our own!
From all her foes defend,
Be her brave People's Friend,
On all her realms descend,
Protect her Throne!

INTERNATIONAL ODE.

MAY 25.

Why that ethereal spirit's frame describe?
You know the race-marks of the Brahmin tribe, —
The spare, slight form, the sloping shoulders'
 droop,
The calm, scholastic air, the clerkly stoop,
The lines of thought the narrowed features wear,
Carved by the edge of keen New England air. . . .

Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?
He seems a wingèd Franklin, sweetly wise,
Born to unlock the secrets of the skies. . . .
If lost at times in vague aerial flights,
None treads with firmer footstep when he lights;
A soaring nature, ballasted with sense,
Wisdom without her wrinkles or pretence.

AT THE SATURDAY CLUB.

MAY 26.

I cannot remember the time when the lilacs
were not in blow on Election-day,—the last
Wednesday in May. A bunch of "laylocks" and
a 'lection bun used to make us happy in old times;
but 'lection-days are over, and we have no festival
of the lilacs, which the old anniversary was, with-
out knowing it. "Artillery Election," with its lan-
guid pageantry and its sermon *obligato*, is not to be
counted.

THE SEASONS.

MAY 27.

The home of my childhood comes back as a vision,—

Hark! Hark! A soft chord from its song-haunted room,—

'T is a morning of May, when the air is Elysian,—
The syringa in bud and the lilac in bloom.

The tell-tales of memory wake from their slumbers,—

I hear the old song with its tender refrain,—
What passion lies hid in those honey-voiced numbers!

What perfume of youth in each exquisite strain!
FOR THE MOORE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

MAY 28.

The great PROFESSOR, strong, broad-shouldered,
square,

In life's rich noontide, joyous, debonair.

His social hour no leaden care alloys,

His laugh rings loud and mirthful as a boy's,

That lusty laugh the Puritan forgot,

What ear has heard it and remembers not? . . .

How does vast Nature lead her living train

In ordered sequence through that spacious brain,

As in the primal hour when Adam named

The new-born tribes that young creation claimed?—

How will her realm be darkened, losing thee,

Her darling, whom we call our AGASSIZ!

AT THE SATURDAY CLUB.

MAY 29.

Not with the anguish of hearts that are breaking
Come we as mourners to weep for our dead ;
Grief in our breasts has grown weary of aching,
Green is the turf where our tears we have
shed. . . .

Hushed are their battle-fields, ended their marches,
Deaf are their ears to the drum-beat of morn,—
Rise from the sod, ye fair columns and arches !
Tell their bright deeds to the ages unborn !
Emblem and legend may fade from the portal,
Keystone may crumble and pillar may fall ;
They were the builders whose work is immortal,
Crowned with the dome that is over us all !

LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE OF HARVARD MEMORIAL
HALL.

MAY 30.

For our own, our loved and lost, we bring
With throbbing hearts and tears that still must
flow,
In full-heaped hands, the opening flowers of spring,
Lilies half-blown, and budding roses, red
As their young cheeks, before the blood was shed
That lent their morning bloom its generous glow.

KING'S CHAPEL.

MAY 31.

The roses are getting ready to light up the glorious summer which is close upon us, and the yellow-birds have been flashing about for the last week and more, and a few days ago, as if to remind us that even at the sweetest season our earth is no longer paradise, a mosquito blew his little horn, and stabbed one of us with his poisoned dagger. To-morrow June will be here. THE SEASONS.

Not his beneath the blood-red star
To win the soldier's envied scar ;
Unarmed he battled for the right,
In Duty's never-ending fight.

Unconquered will, unslumbering eye,
Faith such as bids the martyr die,
The prophet's glance, the master's hand
To mould the work his foresight planned.

Lo, thus he stood ; in danger's strait
The pilot of the Pilgrim State !
Too large his fame for her alone, —
A nation claims him as her own !

INAUGURATION OF THE STATUE OF GOV. ANDREW.

June.

Then bursts the song from every leafy glade,
The yielding season's bridal serenade ;
Then flash the wings returning Summer calls
Through the deep arches of her forest halls, —
The bluebird, breathing from his azure plumes
The fragrance borrowed where the myrtle blooms ;
The thrush, poor wanderer, dropping meekly down,
Clad in his remnant of autumnal brown ;
The oriole, drifting like a flake of fire
Rent by a whirlwind from a blazing spire.
The robin jerking his spasmodic throat,
Repeats, imperious, his *staccato* note ;
The crack-brained bobolink courts his crazy mate,
Poised on a bulrush tipsy with his weight ;
Nay, in his cage the lone canary sings,
Feels the soft air, and spreads his idle wings.

SPRING.

JUNE 1.

Kiss mine eyelids, beauteous Morn,
Blushing into life new-born !
Lend me violets for my hair,
And thy russet robe to wear,
And thy ring of rosiest hue
Set in drops of diamond dew ! . . .

Kiss my lips, thou Lord of light,
Kiss my lips a soft good-night !
Westward sinks thy golden car ;
Leave me but the evening star,
And my solace that shall be,
Borrowing all its light from thee !

FANTASIA.



JUNE 2.

Do you ever wonder why poets talk so much about flowers ? Did you ever hear of a poet who did not talk about them ? Don't you think a poem, which, for the sake of being original should leave them out, would be like those verses where the letter *a* or *e* or some other is omitted ? No, — they will bloom over and over again in poems as in the summer fields, to the end of time, always old and always new. Why should we be more shy of repeating ourselves than the spring be tired of blossoms or the night of stars ?

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 3.

I never wrote a "good" line in my life but the moment after it was written it seemed a hundred years old. Very commonly I had a sudden conviction that I had seen it somewhere. Possibly I may have sometimes unconsciously stolen it, but I do not remember that I ever once detected any historical truth in these sudden convictions of the antiquity of my new thought or phrase. I have learned utterly to distrust them, and never allow them to bully me out of a thought or line.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JUNE 4.

Before we sighed, our griefs were told ;
Before we smiled, our joys were sung ;
And all our passions shaped of old
In accents lost to mortal tongue.

In vain a fresher mould we seek, —
Can all the varied phrases tell
That Babel's wandering children speak
How thrushes sing or lilacs smell ?

Caged in the poet's lonely heart,
Love wastes unheard its tenderest tone ;
The soul that sings must dwell apart,
Its inward melodies unknown.

TO MY READERS.

JUNE 5.

It was now the season of singing-birds, and the woods were haunted with mysterious, tender music. The voices of the birds which love the deeper shades of the forest are sadder than those of the open fields: these are the nuns who have taken the veil, the hermits that have hidden themselves away from the world and tell their griefs to the infinite listening Silences of the wilderness,—for the one deep inner silence that Nature breaks with her fitful superficial sounds becomes multiplied as the image of a star in ruffled waters.

ELSIE VENNER.



JUNE 6.

And I remember, — well-a-day ! —
Thy full-blown summer roundelay,
As when behind a brodered screen
Some holy maiden sings unseen :
With answering notes the woodland rung,
And every tree-top found a tongue.

AN OLD-YEAR SONG.

And hark ! and hark ! the woodland rings ;
There thrilled the thrush's soul :
And look ! that flash of flamy wings, —
The fire-plumed oriole !

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

JUNE 7.

I suppose every day of earth, with its hundred thousand deaths and something more of births, — with its loves and hates, its triumphs and defeats, its pangs and blisses, has more of humanity in it than all the books that were ever written, put together. I believe the flowers growing at this moment send up more fragrance to heaven than was ever exhaled from all the essences ever distilled.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 8.

What blending thoughts our memories share!
What visions yours and mine
Of May-days in whose morning air
The dews were golden wine,
Of vistas bright with opening day,
Whose all-awakening sun
Showed in life's landscape, far away,
The summits to be won!
The heights are gained. — Ah, say not so
For him who smiles at time,
Leaves his tired comrades down below,
And only lives to climb!

TO JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

1880.

JUNE 9.

But now the roses are coming into bloom ; the azalea, wild honeysuckle, is sweetening the hill-sides ; the laurels are beginning to blow ; the white lilies are getting ready to open ; the fireflies are seen now and then, flitting across the darkness ; the katydids, the grasshoppers, the crickets, make themselves heard ; the bullfrogs utter their tremendous voices, and the full chorus of birds makes the air vocal with its melody.

THE SEASONS.

Heaven must surely find the earth in tune
When Home, sweet Home, exhales the breath of
June.

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

JUNE 10.

With softer gales the opening leaves are fanned,
With fairer hues the kindling flowers expand,
The rose-bush reddens with the blush of June,
The groves are vocal with their minstrels' tune,
The mighty elm, beneath whose arching shade
The wandering children of the forest strayed,
Greets the bright morning in its bridal dress,
And spreads its arms the gladsome dawn to bless.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

Well, Time alone can lift the future's curtain, —
Science may teach our children all she knows,
But love will kindle fresh young hearts, 't is certain,
And June will not forget her blushing rose.

THE COMING ERA.

JUNE 11.

Trained in the holy art whose lifted shield
Wards off the darts a never-slumbering foe,
By hearth and wayside lurking, waits to throw,
Oppression taught his helpful arm to wield
The slayer's weapon: on the murderous field
The fiery bolt he challenged laid him low,
Seeking its noblest victim. Even so
The charter of a nation must be sealed!
The healer's brow the hero's honors crowned,
From lowliest duty called to loftiest deed.
Living, the oak-leaf wreath his temples bound;
Dying, the conqueror's laurel was his meed,
Last on the broken rampart's turf to bleed
Where Freedom's victory in defeat was found.

JOSEPH WARREN, M. D.

June 11, 1875.

JUNE 12.

Put an idea into your intelligence and leave it there an hour, a day, a year, without ever having occasion to refer to it. When, at last, you return to it, you do not find it as it was when acquired. It has domiciliated itself, so to speak, — become at home, entered into relations with your other thoughts, and integrated itself with the whole fabric of the mind.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 13.

Memory, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of the smell than by almost any other channel.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Our hearts are held down to our homes by innumerable trivial fibres, but Gulliver was fixed to the soil, you remember, by pinning his head a hair at a time. THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 14.

Sister, we bid you welcome, — we who stand
On the high table-land ;
We who have climbed life's slippery Alpine slope,
And rest, still leaning on the staff of hope,
Looking along the silent Mer de Glace,
Leading our footsteps where the dark crevasse
Yawns in the frozen sea we all must pass, —
Sister, we clasp your hand !

Thrice welcome ! shining names our missals show
Amid their rubrics' glow,
But search the blazoned record's starry line,
What halo's radiance fills the page like thine ?
Thou who by some celestial clew couldst find
The way to all the hearts of all mankind,
On thee, already canonized, enshrined,
What more can Heaven bestow ?

AT THE SUMMIT.

June 14, 1882.

JUNE 15.

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
Some arm as stout in death reposes, —
From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
Her valor's life-blood runs in roses ;
Nay, let our brothers of the West
Write smiling in their florid pages,
One half her soil has walked the rest
In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages !
In earth's broad temple where we stand,
Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
We hold the missal in our hand,
Bright with the lines our Mother taught us.
Where'er its blazoned page betrays
The glistening links of gilded fetters,
Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
Her rubric stained in crimson letters !

A GOOD TIME GOING.

JUNE 16.

The laurels were just coming into bloom, — the yellow lilies, earlier than their fairer sisters, pushing their golden cups through the water, not content, like those, to float on the surface of the stream that fed them, emblems of showy wealth, and like that, drawing all manner of insects to feed upon them. The miniature forests of ferns came down to the edge of the stream, their tall, bending plumes swaying in the breeze.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

JUNE 17.

With brazen trumpets blaring, the flames behind
them glaring,
The deadly wall before them, in close array they
come ;
Still onward, upward toiling, like a dragon's fold
uncoiling, —
Like the rattlesnake's shrill warning the reverber-
ating drum !
Over heaps all torn and gory, — shall I tell the
fearful story,
How they surged above the breastwork, as a sea
breaks over a deck ;
How, driven, yet scarce defeated, our worn-out
men retreated,
With their powder-horns all emptied, like the
swimmers from a wreck ?

GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER-HILL BATTLE.

JUNE 18.

O gracious Mother, whose benignant breast
Wakes us to life, and lulls us all to rest,
How thy sweet features, kind to every clime,
Mock with their smile the wrinkled front of time !
We stain thy flowers — they blossom o'er the dead ;
We rend thy bosom, and it gives us bread ; . . .
Our maddening conflicts scar thy fairest plain,
Still thy soft answer is the growing grain.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

JUNE 19.

Pascal and Edwards were alike sensitive, pure in heart and in life, profoundly penetrated with the awful meaning of human existence; both filled with a sense of their own littleness and sinfulness; both singularly powerful as controversialists. . . . Pascal was a true poet who did not care to wear the singing robes. His prose is light and elastic everywhere with *esprit*; much of that of Edwards reminds us of the unleavened bread of the Israelite: holy it may be, but heavy it certainly is. The exquisite wit which so delights us in Pascal could not be claimed for Edwards; yet he could be satirical in a way to make the gravest person smile. . . . Both had the same fondness for writing in the form of aphorisms, — natural to strong thinkers, who act like the bankers whose habit it is to sign checks, but not to count out money.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

JUNE 20.

The born soldier, fate decreed to wreak
His martial manhood on a class in Greek,
Popkin! How that explosive name recalls
The grand old Busby of our ancient halls!
Such faces looked from Skippon's grim platoons,
Such figures rode with Ireton's stout dragoons;
He gave his strength to learning's gentle charms,
But every accent sounded "Shoulder arms!"

VESTIGIA QUINQUE RETRORSUM.

JUNE 21.

At last come the strawberries, of which Walton quotes from Dr. Boteler the famous saying, "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did." When they have ripened in our own gardens, summer has begun, hardly till then; and they mark pretty nearly the true astronomical beginning of the season.

THE SEASONS.

JUNE 22.

The manifold delicious, mysterious impressions of that wonderful June night. The stars were shining between the tall trees, as if all the jewels of heaven had been set in one belt of midnight sky. The voices of the wind, as they sighed through the pines, seemed like the breath of a sleeping child, and then, as they lisped from the soft, tender leaves of beeches and maples, like the half-articulate whisper of the mother hushing all the intrusive sounds that might awaken it.

Then came the pulsating monotone of the frogs from a far-off pool, the harsh cry of an owl from an old tree that overhung it, the splash of a mink or musquash, and nearer by, the light step of a woodchuck . . . Sweet odors from oozing pines, from dewy flowers, from spicy leaves stole out of the tangled thickets, and made the whole scene more dream-like with their faint, mingled suggestions.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

JUNE 23.

Firm were their hearts in danger's hour,
Sweet was their manhood's morning flower,
Their hopes with rainbow hues were bright,
How swiftly winged the sudden night!

O Mother! on thy marble page
Thy children read, from age to age,
The mighty word that upward leads
Through noble thought to nobler deeds.

TRUTH, heaven-born TRUTH, their fearless guide,
Thy saints have lived, thy heroes died.
Our love has reared their earthly shrine,
Their glory be forever thine!

DEDICATION OF HARVARD MEMORIAL HALL.

June 23, 1874.

JUNE 24.

This dust, once breathing, changed its joyous life
For toil and hunger, wounds and mortal strife;
Love, friendship, learning's all-prevailing charms,
For the cold bivouac and the clash of arms.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

Ah, who shall count a rescued nation's debt,
Or sum in words our martyrs' silent claims?
Who shall our heroes' dread exchange forget, —
All life, youth, hope, could promise to allure
For all that soul could brave or flesh endure?

They shaped our future; we but carve their
names.

KING'S CHAPEL.

JUNE 25.

We find her at her stately door, and in her ancient
chair,

Dressed in the robes of red and green she always
loved to wear.

Her eye has all its radiant youth, her cheek its
morning flame ;

We drop our roses as we go, hers flourish still the
same.

MEETING OF THE ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE.



JUNE 26.

If one would dream of being remembered by
coming generations, what monument so enduring
as a college building that shall bear his name, and
even when its solid masonry shall crumble give
place to another still charged with the same sacred
duty of perpetuating his remembrance. Who was
Sir Matthew Holworthy, that his name is a house-
hold word on the lips of thousands of scholars,
and will be centuries hence, as that of Walter de
Merton, dead six hundred years ago is to-day at
Oxford? Who was Mistress Holden, that she
should be blessed among women by having her
name spoken gratefully and the little edifice she
caused to be erected preserved as her monument
from generation to generation?

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 27.

Come while the rose is red, —
While blue-eyed Summer smiles
On the green ripples round yon sunken piles
Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian isles,
And on the sultry air
The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in
prayer !

MUSA.

JUNE 28.

The rare joys, the infinite delights, that intoxicate me on some sweet June morning, when the river and bay are smooth as a sheet of beryl-green silk, and I run along ripping it up with my knife-edged shell of a boat, the rent closing after me like those wounds of angels which Milton tells us of, but the seam still shining for many a long rood behind me. . . . To take shelter from the sunbeams under one of the thousand-footed bridges, and look down its interminable colonnades, while overhead streams and thunders that other river whose every wave is a human soul flowing to eternity as the river below flows to the ocean, — lying there moored unseen, in loneliness so profound that the columns of Tadmor in the Desert could not seem more remote from life, — the cool breeze on one's forehead, the stream whispering against the half-sunken pillars.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JUNE 29.

Come, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

BILL AND JOE.

And be his titles what they will,
In spite of manhood's claim,
The graybeard is a school-boy still,
And loves his school-boy name ;
It calms the ruler's stormy breast
Whom hurrying care pursues,
And brings a sense of peace and rest,
Like slippers after shoes.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

JUNE 30.

These blessed days are waning all too fast,
And June's bright visions mingling with the past ;
Lilacs have bloomed and faded, and the rose
Has dropped its petals, but the clover blows,
And fills its slender tubes with honeyed sweets ;
The fields are pearled with milk-white margarites ;
The dandelion, which you sang of old,
Has lost its pride of place, its crown of gold,
But still displays its feathery-mantled globe,
Which children's breath, or wandering winds un-
robe.

TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

July.

Here ! sweep these foolish leaves away,
I will not crush my brains to-day !
Look ! are the southern curtains drawn ?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone !

Not that, — the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef !
Its breath is heated ; — I would swing
The broad gray plumes, — the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood ! —
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odors on the air,
And wheel me up my Indian chair,
And spread some book not otherwise
Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

— Who knows it not, — this dead recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil, —
The pulse that flutters faint and low
When Summer's seething breezes blow !

MIDSUMMER.

JULY 1.

What should decide one in choosing a summer residence? — Constitution, first of all. Comfort is essential to enjoyment. You must cut your climate to your constitution, as much as your clothing to your shape. After this, consult your taste and convenience. But if you would be happy in Berkshire, you must carry mountains in your brain ; and if you would enjoy Nahant, you must have an ocean in your soul. Nature plays at dominos with you ; you must match her piece or she will never give it up to you.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 2.

There are three classes of lookers-on at the show of Nature who may be distinguished from each other. The first set includes the patient statisticians. The second consists of the natural observers. The third class contains the poets, who look at things mainly for their beauty or their symbolic uses.

Everybody studies nature with the poets. Many take delight in the discursive observations of the rambling naturalist. A few interest themselves in the series of facts accumulated by the systematic observer. . . . How full every walk in the country is of moving and still life, always changing its aspect, and always full of new delights when the eyes have once been opened.

THE SEASONS.

JULY 3.

Wake in our breasts the living fires,
The holy faith that warmed our sires.

ARMY HYMN.

I give you all the Ship of State :
Freedom's last venture is her priceless freight ;
God speed her, keep her, bless her, while she
steers
Amid the breakers of unsounded years.

THE SHIP OF STATE.

JULY 4.

But who is he whose massive frame belies
The maiden shyness of his downcast eyes ?
Who broods in silence till, by questions pressed,
Some answer struggles from his laboring breast ?
An artist Nature meant to dwell apart,
Locked in his studio with a human heart,
Tracking its caverned passions to their lair,
And all its throbbing mysteries laying bare.

Count it no marvel that he broods alone
Over the heart he studies, — 't is his own ;
So in his page whatever shape it wear,
The Essex wizard's shadowed self is there, —
The great ROMANCER, hid beneath his veil
Like the stern preacher of his sombre tale ;
Virile in strength, yet bashful as a girl,
Prouder than Hester, sensitive as Pearl.

AT THE SATURDAY CLUB.

JULY 5.

Hull, Bainbridge, Porter, — where are they?
The waves their answer roll,
“Still bright in memory’s sunset ray, —
God rest each gallant soul !”
A brighter name must dim their light
With more than noontide ray,
The Sea-King of the “River Fight,”
The Conqueror of the Bay.

TO ADMIRAL FARRAGUT.

I glance at the placards on the blank wall I am passing, and there I see the colossal head of Barnum, the untiring, inexhaustible, insuperable, ever triumphant and jubilant Barnum, who came to his atmospheric life less than a year after I began breathing the fatal mixture, and still wages Titanic battle with his own past superlatives.

AN AFTER-BREAKFAST TALK.



JULY 6.

The cows are standing mid-leg deep in the pool, their tails going with rhythmical regularity, looking as we often want to feel, vacant of thought, which chases us like Io’s gad-fly, meekly unquestioning, accepting life as a finality. For the lower creatures are limited but absolute affirmations, while man is an infinite question. What is its answer?

THE SEASONS.

JULY 7.

Those homelier wildflowers which we call *weeds* ; — yellow jannaped buttercups and star-disked dandelions, lying in the grass, like sparks that have leaped from the kindling sun of summer ; the profuse daisy-like flower which whitens the fields, to the great disgust of liberal shepherds, yet seems fair to loving eyes, with its button-like mound of gold set round with milk-white rays ; the tall-stemmed succory, setting its pale blue flowers aflame one after another ; the red and white clovers ; the broad, flat leaves of the plantain, — “the white man’s foot,” as the Indians called it ; — those common growths which fling themselves to be crushed under our feet and our wheels, making themselves so cheap in this perpetual martyrdom that we forget each of them is a ray of the Divine beauty. THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 8.

Green’ is the wreath their brows so long have worn, —

The minstrels of the morn,
Who, while the Orient burned with new-born flame,
Caught that celestial fire
And struck a Nation’s lyre !

These taught the western winds the poet’s name ;
Theirs the first opening buds, the maiden flowers
of fame !

DEDICATION OF THE HALLECK MONUMENT.

JULY 9.

In the fields the blue succory lights one or two blossoms in its chandelier ; it is thrifty, and means to have its lamps last, not burn all out at once. In the garden the stately hollyhock is practising the same economy.

Is anything more charming, in its way, than an old-fashioned single hollyhock, with its pink, or white, or yellow, or purple flower, and the little pollen powdered tree springing up from the bottom of the corolla ? A bee should be buzzing in it, for a bee is never so deliciously pavilioned as in the bell tent of the hollyhock.

THE SEASONS.



JULY 10.

The woods at first convey the impression of profound repose, and yet, if you watch their ways with open ear, you find the life which is in them is restless and nervous as that of a woman : the little twigs are crossing and twining and separating like slender fingers that cannot be still ; the stray leaf is to be flattened into its place like a truant curl ; the limbs sway and twist, impatient of their constrained attitude ; and the rounded masses of foliage swell upward and subside from time to time with long soft sighs, and, it may be, the falling of a few rain-drops which had lain hidden among the deeper shadows.

ELSIE VENNER.

JULY 11.

No natural Gothic arch compares with that formed by two American elms, where their lofty jets of foliage shoot across each other's ascending curves, to intermingle their showery flakes of green. When one looks through a long double row of these, he beholds a temple not built with hands, fairer than any minster, with all its clustered stems and fluttering capitals, that ever grew in stone.

—◆—
ELSIE VENNER.

JULY 12.

What names that plain New England town reckons in the roll of its inhabitants! Soldiers in the war of Independence, and their worthy successors in the war of Freedom; lawyers and statesmen; ministers; and men of genius such as the idealist and poet whose inspiration has kindled so many souls; as the romancer who has given an atmosphere to the hard outlines of our stern New England; as that unique individual, half college-graduate and half Algonquin, the Robinson Crusoe of Walden Pond, who carried out a school-boy whim to its full proportions, and told the story of Nature in undress as only one who had hidden in her bedroom could have told it. . . .

Its groves, its streams, its houses, are haunted by undying memories, and its hillsides and hollows are made holy by the dust that is covered by their turf.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

JULY 13.

Call him not old, whose visionary brain
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.
For him in vain the envious seasons roll
Who bears eternal summer in his soul.
If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,
Spring with her birds, or children at their play,
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art,
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,
Turn to the record where his years are told, —
Count his gray hairs, — they cannot make him old !

—◆— THE OLD PLAYER.

JULY 14.

There was no honester chronicler than our clerical Pepys, good, hearty, sweet-souled, fact-loving Dr. John Pierce of Brookline, who knew the dates of birth and death of the graduates of Harvard, starred and unstarred, better, one is tempted to say (Hibernice), than they did themselves.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

If we did but know how to question these charming old people before it is too late ! About ten years, more or less, after the generation in advance of our own has all died off, it occurs to us all at once, "There ! I can ask my old friend what he knows of that picture, which must be a Copley ; of that house and its legends about which there is such a mystery." . . . Too late ! Too late !

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 15.

As soon as we are old enough to take in large family histories, we never see an individual in a face of any stock we know, but a mosaic copy of a pattern, with fragmentary tints from this and that ancestor.

The analysis of a face into its ancestral elements requires that it should be examined in the very earliest infancy, before it has lost that ancient and solemn look it brings with it out of the past eternity; and again in that brief space when Life, the mighty sculptor, has done his work, and Death, his silent servant, lifts the veil and lets us look at the marble lines he has wrought so faithfully; and lastly, while a painter who can seize all the traits of a countenance is building it up, feature after feature, from the slight outline to the finished portrait.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 16.

There was one picture on their walls, that of a lady, by Sir Joshua, which both of us found very captivating. This is what is often happening in the visits we make. Some painting by a master looks down upon us from its old canvas and leaves a lasting copy of itself to be stored in memory's picture gallery. These surprises are not so likely to happen in the New World as in the Old.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

JULY 17.

The old English pattern of the New England mansion-house is Sir Thomas Abney's place, where dear good Dr. Watts said prayers for the family, and wrote those blessed hymns of his that sing us into consciousness in our cradles, and come back to us in sweet, single verses, between the moments of wandering and of stupor, when we lie dying, and sound over us when we can no longer hear them, bringing grateful tears to the hot, aching eyes beneath the thick, black veils, and carrying the holy calm with them which filled the good man's heart.

—◆—
ELSIE VENNER.

JULY 18.

Such people as White of Selborne who love to wander in the fields and pick up all the interesting facts that come in their way, . . . charming people, a little miscellaneous in their gatherings, but with eyes in their fingers, so that they spy out everything curious, and get hold of it as a magnet picks out iron filings.

THE SEASONS.

Gilbert White was not a poet, neither was he a great systematic naturalist. But he used his eyes on the world about him ; and he found occupation and happiness in his daily walks, and won as large a measure of immortality within the confines of his little village as he could have gained in exploring the sources of the Nile.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

JULY 19.

Women are twice as religious as men ; — all the world knows that. Whether they are any *better* in the eyes of Absolute Justice, might be questioned ; for the additional religious element supplied by sex hardly seems to be a matter of praise or blame. But in all common aspects they are so much above us that we get most of our religion from them, — from their teachings, from their example, — above all from their pure affections.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 20.

I would have a woman as true as Death. At the first real lie which works from the heart outward, she should be tenderly chloroformed into a better world, where she can have an angel for a governess, and feed on strange fruits which will make her all over again, even to her bones and marrow. — Whether gifted with the accident of beauty or not, she should have been moulded in the rose red clay of Love, before the breath of life made a moving mortal of her. Love-capacity is a congenital endowment ; and I think, after a while one gets to know the warm-hued natures it belongs to from the pretty pipe-clay counterfeits of them.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 21.

I love to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
Thou pretty Katydid !
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks, —
Old gentlefolks are they, —
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way. TO AN INSECT.

JULY 22.

Once in a while, even in our Northern cities, in a very hot summer's day one may realize by a sudden extension in his sphere of consciousness, how closely he is shut up for the most part. Do you not remember something like this? July, between 1 and 2 P. M., Fahrenheit 96°, or thereabout. Windows all gaping like the mouths of panting dogs. Long, stinging cry of a locust comes in from a tree, half a mile off; had forgotten there was such a tree. Baby's screams from a house several blocks distant;—never knew there were any babies in the neighborhood before. Tinman pounding something that clatters dreadfully, — very distinct, but don't remember any tinman's shop near by. Horses stamping on pavement to get off flies. When you hear these four sounds, you may set it down as a warm day.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 23.

Devonshire House, like the other great houses, is a museum of paintings, statues, objects of interest of all sorts. . . . Lord Hartington came in while we were there. All the men who are distinguished in political life become familiar to the readers of *Punch* in their caricatures, so that we know them at sight. A good caricature, which seizes the prominent features and gives them the character Nature hinted, but did not fully carry out, is a work of genius. Nature herself is a remorseless caricaturist, as our daily intercourse with our fellow men and women makes evident to us. Hardly an English statesman in bodily presence could be mistaken by any of *Punch's* readers.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.



JULY 24.

It is a fine thing to be an oracle to which an appeal is always made in all discussions. The men of facts wait their turn in grim silence, with that slight tension about the nostrils which the consciousness of carrying a "settler" in the form of a fact or a revolver gives the individual thus armed. When a person is really full of information, and does not abuse it to crush conversation, his part is to that of the real talkers what the instrumental accompaniment is in a trio or quartette of vocalists.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 25.

That name the kind apostle bore
Who shames the sullen creeds,
Not trusting less, but loving more,
And showing faith by deeds.

TO JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

Heaven rains on every heart,
But there its showers divide,
The drops of mercy choosing as they part
The dark or glowing side.

One kindly deed may turn
The fountain of thy soul
To love's sweet day-star, that shall o'er thee burn
Long as its currents roll!

THE PROMISE.



JULY 26.

There are some people whose rhetoric consists of a slight habitual understatement. I often tell Mrs. Professor that one of her "I think it's so's" is worth the Bible-oath of all the rest of the household that they "know it's so." When you find a person a little better than his word, a little more liberal than his promise, a little more than borne out in his statement by his facts, a little larger in deed than in speech, you recognize a kind of eloquence in that person's utterance not laid down in Blair or Campbell.

ELSIE VENNER.

JULY 27.

The way to argue down a vice is, not to tell lies about it, — to say that it has no attractions, when everybody knows that it has, — but rather to let it make out its case just as it certainly will in the moment of temptation, and then meet it with the weapons furnished by the Divine armory. Ithuriel did not spit the toad on his spear, you remember, but touched him with it, and the blasted angel took the sad glories of his true shape. If he had shown fight then, the fair spirits would have known how to deal with him.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JULY 28.

I think you will find that people who honestly mean to be true really contradict themselves much more rarely than those who try to be “consistent.” But a great many things we say can be made to appear contradictory simply because they are partial views of a truth and may often look unlike at first, as a front view of a face and its profile often do.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

In opinions look not always back ;
Your wake is nothing, mind the coming track :
Leave what you 've done for what you have to do ;
Don't be “consistent,” but be simply true.

A RHYMED LESSON.

JULY 29.

Writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle ; you may hit the reader's mind, or miss it ; — but talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine ; if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you can't help hitting it.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

I have often observed that vulgar persons and public audiences of inferior collective intelligence have this in common : the least thing draws off their minds, when you are speaking to them.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



JULY 30.

Nobody talks much that does n't say unwise things, — things he did not mean to say ; as no person plays much without striking a false note sometimes. Talk, to me, is only spading up the ground, for crops of thought. I can't answer for what will turn up. If I could, it would n't be talking but "speaking my piece." Better, I think, the hearty abandonment of one's self to the suggestions of the moment, at the risk of an occasional slip of the tongue, perceived the instant it escapes but just one syllable too late, than the royal reputation of never saying a foolish thing.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

JULY 31.

In candent ire the solar splendor flames ;
The foles, languescient pend from arid rames ;
His humid front the cive, anhelng, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine !

To me, alas ! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum, —
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue !

Me wretched ! Let me curr to quercine shades !
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids !
O, night I vole to some umbrageous clump, —
Depart, — be off, — excede, — evade, — erump !

ÆSTIVATION.

An unpublished poem, by my late Latin tutor.

August.

So onward, o'er the rugged way
That runs through rocks and sand,
Showered by the tempest-driven spray,
From bays on either hand,
That shut between their outstretched arms
The crews of Marblehead,
The lords of ocean's watery farms,
Who plough the waves for bread.
How fair the azure fields in sight
Before the low-browed inn !
The tumbling billows fringe with light
The crescent shore of Lynn ;
Nahant thrusts outward through the waves
Her arm of yellow sand,
And breaks the roaring surge that braves
The gauntlet on her hand ;
With eddying whirl the waters lock
Yon treeless mound forlorn,
The sharp-winged sea-fowl's breeding-rock,
That fronts the Spouting Horn ;
Then free the white-sailed shallows glide,
And wide the ocean smiles,
Till, shoreward bent, his streams divide
The two bare Misery Isles. A. NES.

AUGUST 1.

O Nature ! bare thy loving breast,
And give thy child one hour of rest, —
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green !

So, curtained by a singing pine,
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,
Till lost in dreams, my faltering lay
In sweeter music dies away.

MIDSUMMER.

Warren, whose arm the doughtiest warriors fear,
Asks of the startled crowd to lend its ear, —
Proud of his calling, him the world loves best,
Not as the coming, but the parting guest

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

AUGUST 2.

Poets, like youngest children, never grow
Out of their mother's fondness. Nature so
Holds their soft hands, and will not let them go,

Till at the last they track with even feet
Her rhythmic footsteps, and their pulses beat
Twinned with her pulses, and their lips repeat

The secrets she has told them, as their own ;
Thus is the inmost soul of Nature known,
And the rapt minstrel shares her awful throne !

BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

AUGUST 3.

I once went to a church in London and heard the famous Edward Irving preach, and heard some of his congregation speak in the strange words characteristic of their miraculous gift of tongues. I had a respect for the logical basis of this singular phenomenon. I have always thought it was natural that any celestial message should demand a language of its own, only to be understood by divine illumination. All human words tend, of course, to stop short in human meaning.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



AUGUST 4.

One broad, white sail in Spezzia's treacherous bay ;

On comes the blast ; too daring bark, beware !
The cloud has clasped her ; lo ! it melts away ;
The wide, waste waters, but no sail is there. . . .

But Love still prayed, with agonizing wail,
" One, one last look, ye heaving waters, yield ! "
Till Ocean, clashing in his jointed mail, •
Raised the pale burden on his level shield.

Slow from the shore the sullen waves retire ;
His form a nobler element shall claim ;
Nature baptized him in ethereal fire,
And Death shall crown him with a wreath of
flame.

AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY.

AUGUST 5.

A poet sails without visible landmarks to unexplored regions of truth, which philosophy has yet to lay down on its atlas. The philosopher gets his track by observation ; the poet trusts to his inner sense, and makes the straighter and swifter line.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



AUGUST 6.

The year 1809, which introduced me to atmospheric existence, was the birth-year of Tennyson, Gladstone, Lord Houghton, and Darwin. It seems like an honor to have come into the world in such company, but it is more likely to promote humility than vanity in a common mortal to find himself coeval with such illustrious personages. Men born in the same year watch each other, especially as the sands of life begin to run low.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

I saw the poet to the best advantage, under his own trees, and walking over his own domain. . . . In this garden of England, the Isle of Wight, where everything grows with such a lavish extravagance of greenness that it seems as if it must bankrupt the soil before autumn, I felt as if weary eyes and overtasked brains might reach their happiest haven of rest.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

AUGUST 7.

“Self-made” is imperfectly made, or education is a superfluity and a failure.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

All vanished! It were idle to complain
That ere the fruits shall come the flowers must
fall ;

Yet somewhat we have lost amidst our gain,
Some rare ideals time may not restore,
The charm of courtly breeding, seen no more,
And reverence, dearest ornament of all.

KING'S CHAPEL.

AUGUST 8.

O'ershadowed by the walls that climb,
Piled up in air by living hands,
A rock amid the waves of time,
Our gray old house of worship stands.

High o'er the pillared aisles we love
The symbols of the past look down ;
Unharm'd, unharmed, throned above,
Behold the mitre and the crown !

Let not our younger faith forget
The loyal souls that held them dear ;
The prayers we read their tears have wet,
The hymns we sing they loved to hear.

HYMN FOR KING'S CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY.

AUGUST 9.

Nor let the rhymester of the hour deride
The straight-backed measure with its stately stride;
It gave the mighty voice of Dryden scope;
It sheathed the steel-bright epigrams of Pope;
In Goldsmith's verse it learned a sweeter strain;
Byron and Campbell wore its clanking chain;
I smile to listen while the critic's scorn
Flouts the proud purple kings have nobly worn;
Bid each new rhymmer try his dainty skill
And mould his frozen phrases as he will;
We thank the artist for his neat device;
The shape is pleasing, though the stuff is ice.

BEFORE THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

AUGUST 10.

The opinions of relatives as to a man's powers are very commonly of little value; not merely because they sometimes overrate their own flesh and blood, as some may suppose; on the contrary, they are quite as likely to underrate those whom they have grown into the habit of considering like themselves.

The advent of genius is like what florists style the *breaking* of a seedling tulip into what we may call high-caste colors, — ten thousand dingy flowers, then one with the divine streak.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 11.

His acuteness and accuracy of observation were so great that an oversight or an error was not likely to be detected in any of his work by any other than himself. His mental eye was not only, as we should say of a good microscope, at once remarkable for penetration and definition, but it was as nearly achromatic as we can hope to find any human organ of intellectual vision. His word was as trustworthy as a plumb-line or a spirit-level. . . .

Jeffries Wyman would have been more famous if he had been less modest. He did a man's work with a woman's patience, meekness, fidelity, and noiseless efficiency. . . . Who has ever preached such a sermon as this sweet and lovely life has been, always setting forth in the golden letters of daily actions?

PROFESSOR JEFFRIES WYMAN.



AUGUST 12.

Insanity is often the logic of an accurate mind overtasked. Good mental machinery ought to break its own wheels and levers, if anything is thrust among them suddenly which tends to stop them or reverse their motion. A weak mind does not accumulate force enough to hurt itself; stupidity often saves a man from going mad.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 13.

The green-haired maize her silken tresses laid,
In soft luxuriance, on her harsh brocade ;
The gourd that swells beneath her tossing plume ;
The coarser wheat that rolls in lakes of bloom, —
Its coral stems and milk-white flowers alive
With the wide murmurs of the scattered hive.

DEDICATORY POEM.

Our children know each wildwood smell,
The bayberry and the fern,
The man who does not know them well
Is all too old to learn.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

AUGUST 14.

I don't like to say it, but poets commonly have no larger stock of tunes than hand-organs ; and when you hear them piping up under your window you know pretty well what to expect. The more stops, the better. Do let them all be pulled out in their turn !

So spoke my friend, the Poet, and read me one of his stateliest songs, and after it a gay chanson, and then a string of epigrams. All true, — he said, — all flowers of his soul ; only one with the corolla spread, and another with its disk half opened, and the third with the heart-leaves covered up and only a petal or two showing its tip through the calyx. The water-lily is the type of the poet's soul.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 15.

Two things, at least, Napoleon accomplished: he opened the way for ability of all kinds, and he dealt the death-blow to the divine right of kings and all the abuses which clung to that superstition. If I brought nothing else away from my visit to his mausoleum, I left it impressed with what a man can be when fully equipped by nature, and placed in circumstances where his forces can have full play. "How infinite in faculty! . . . in apprehension how like a god!" Such were my reflections; very much, I suppose, like those of the average visitor, and too obviously having nothing to require contradiction or comment.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

AUGUST 16.

Scotland. The whole country full of the romance of history and poetry. Most to be remembered the incomparable loveliness of Edinburgh. I was fascinated by the singular beauties of that "romantic town," which Scott called his own, and which holds his memory as a most precious part of its inheritance. The castle with the precipitous rocky wall out of which it grows, the deep ravines with their bridges, pleasant Calton Hill and memorable Holyrood Palace, the new town and the old town with their strange contrasts, and Arthur's Seat overlooking all.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

AUGUST 17.

Whose smile is that? Its pattern Nature gave,
A sunbeam dancing in a dimpled wave;
KIRKLAND alone such grace from Heaven could
win,
His features radiant as the soul within;
That smile would let him through Saint Peter's
gate
While sad-eyed martyrs had to stand and wait.

VESTIGIA QUINQUE RETRORSUM.



AUGUST 18.

A little woolly knob, which looked and saw
with wonder the strawberry reddening, and perceived the fragrance it diffused all around, begins to fill out, and grow soft and pulpy and sweet; and at last a glow comes to its cheek, and we say the peach is ripening. When Nature has done with it, and delivers it to us in its perfection, we forget all the lesser fruits which have gone before it. If the flavor of the peach and the fragrance of the rose are not found in some fruit and flower which grow by the side of the river of life, an earth-born spirit might be forgiven for missing them. The strawberry and pink are very delightful, but we could be happy without them.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

AUGUST 19.

Flamsteed and Newton look with brows unclouded,
Their strife forgotten with its faded scars, —
Titans who found the world of space too crowded
To walk in peace among its myriad stars.

A WELCOME TO BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD.

The glittering lyric bounds elastic by,
With flashing ringlets and exulting eye,
While every image, in her airy whirl,
Gleams like a diamond on a dancing girl !
POETRY.

AUGUST 20.

I come under your windows, some fine morning,
and play you one of my adagio movements, and
some of you say, — This is good, — play us so al-
ways. But, dear friends, if I did not change the
stop sometimes, the machine would wear out in
one part and rust in another. How easily this or
that tune flows ! — you say, — there must be no end
of just such melodies in him. — I will open the poor
machine for you one moment, and you shall look.
— Ah ! Every note marks where a spur of steel
has been driven in. It is easy to grind out the
song, but to plant these bristling points which
make it was the painful task of time.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 21.

Nor think that Nature saves her bloom
And slights our grassy plain ;
For us she wears her court costume, —
Look on its broidered train ;
The lily with the sprinkled dots,
Brands of the noontide beam ;
The cardinal, and the blood-red spots,
Its double in the stream,
As if some wounded eagle's breast,
Slow throbbing o'er the plain,
Had left its airy path impressed
In drops of scarlet rain.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH.

AUGUST 22.

I shall speak of trees as we see them, love them, adore them in the fields, where they are alive, holding their green sun-shades over our heads, talking to us with their hundred thousand whispering tongues, looking down on us with that sweet meekness which belongs to huge, but limited organisms, — which one sees in the brown eyes of oxen, but most in the patient posture, the outstretched arms, and the heavy-drooping ropes of these vast beings endowed with life, but not with soul, — which outgrow us and outlive us, but stand helpless, — poor things! — while Nature dresses and undresses them, like so many full-sized, but underwitted children. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 23.

These United States furnish the greatest market for intellectual *green fruit* of all the places in the world. I think so, at any rate. The demand for intellectual labor is so enormous and the market so far from nice, that young talent is apt to fare like unripe gooseberries, — get plucked to make a fool of. . . . How can one let his fruit hang in the sun until it gets fully ripe, while there are so many hungry mouths ready to swallow it and proclaim its praises? Consequently, there never was such a collection of crude pippins and half-grown wind-falls as our native literature displays among its fruits. There are literary green-groceries at every corner, which will buy anything, from a button-pear to a pine-apple. It takes a long apprenticeship to train a whole people to reading and writing.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 24.

Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up. That which was a weed in one intelligence becomes a flower in the other, and a flower, again, dwindles down to a mere weed by the same change. Healthy growths may become poisonous by falling upon the wrong mental soil, and what seemed a night-shade in one mind unfold as a morning-glory in the other. THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 25.

Nobody knows New England who is not on terms of intimacy with one of its elms. The elm comes nearer to having a soul than any other vegetable creature among us.

ELSIE VENNER.

When the broad elm, sole empress of the plain,
Whose circling shadow speaks a century's reign
Wreathes in the clouds her regal diadem, —
A forest waving on a single stem.

POETRY.



AUGUST 26.

There is a mother-idea in each particular kind of tree, which, if well marked, is probably embodied in the poetry of every language. Take the oak, for instance, and we find it always standing as a type of strength and endurance. I wonder if you ever thought of the single mark of supremacy which distinguishes this tree from all our other forest-trees? All the rest of them shirk the work of resisting gravity; the oak alone defies it. It chooses the horizontal direction for its limbs, so that their whole weight may tell,—and then stretches them out fifty or sixty feet, so that the strain may be mighty enough to be worth resisting.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 27.

I have lived by the sea-shore and by the mountains. — No, I am not going to say which is best. The one where your place is is the best for you. But this difference there is: you can domesticate mountains, but the sea is *feræ naturæ*. . . .

The mountains give their lost children berries and water; the sea mocks their thirst and lets them die. The mountains have a grand, stupid, lovable tranquillity; the sea has a fascinating, treacherous intelligence. The mountains dwarf mankind and foreshorten the procession of its long generations. The sea drowns out humanity and time; it has no sympathy with either; for it belongs to eternity, and of that it sings its monotonous song for ever and ever. THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 28.

Some books are edifices to stand as they are built; some are hewn stones ready to form a part of future edifices; some are quarries from which stones are to be split for shaping and after use.

CRIME AND AUTOMATISM.

The works of other men live, but their personality dies out of their labors; the poet, who reproduces himself in his creation, as no other artist does or can, goes down to posterity with all his personality blended with whatever is imperishable in his song. THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

AUGUST 29.

His is not the playwright's page ;
His table does not ape the stage ;
What matter if the figures seen
Are only shadows on a screen,
He finds in them his lurking thought,
And on their lips the words he sought,
Like one who sits before the keys
And plays a tune himself to please.

EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST-TABLE SERIES.

Here are varied strains that sing
All the changes life can bring,
Songs when joyous friends have met,
Songs the mourner's tears have wet. . . .
Year by year, like milestones placed,
Mark the record Friendship traced.
Prisoned in the walls of time
Life has notched itself in rhyme.

PROGRAMME.

AUGUST 30.

It is a rare privilege in our nomadic state to find the home of one's childhood and its immediate neighborhood unchanged. Many born poets, I am afraid, flower poorly in song, or not at all, because they have been too often transplanted.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

All else of earth may perish ; love alone
Not heaven shall find outgrown !

H. C. M., H S., J. K. W.

AUGUST 31.

In the last week of August used to fall Commencement day at Cambridge. Commencement was a great occasion all through my boyhood. It has died away into next to nothing, in virtue of the growth of the republican principle. Its observances emanated from the higher authorities of the College. "Class Day," which has killed it, is a triumph of universal suffrage over divine right.

But what a time it was for us young Cantabrigians, born under the shadow of the College walls! . . . The year had nothing for us boys like "the tents." Tuesday night was to us like the evening before Agincourt. The sun crawled slowly up the sky, like a golden tortoise, — how long a day was then! At last the blare of a trumpet! The Governor was coming, guarded by his terrible light-horse troop. . . .

Let those who will go into the old yellow meeting-house to hear the "parts" spoken; for us rather the gay festivities of the booths and the stands, where the sovereigns are enjoying their royal feast, as they have done since the time when they used to be ferried over the river and come round by Charlestown. . . .

Thus the summer used to die out in a blaze of glory, for us, the boys of Cambridge.

THE SEASONS.

September.

Scarce could the parting ocean close,
Seamed by the Mayflower's cleaving bow,
When o'er the rugged desert rose
The waves that tracked the Pilgrim's plough.

Then sprang from many a rock-strewn field
The rippling grass, the nodding grain,
Such growths as English meadows yield
To scanty sun and frequent rain.

But when the fiery days were done,
And Autumn brought his purple haze,
Then, kindling in the slanted sun,
The hillsides gleamed with golden maize. . . .

See how the softening Mother's breast
Warms to her children's patient wiles, —
Her lips by loving Labor pressed
Break in a thousand dimpling smiles.

From when the flushing bud of June
Dawns with its first auroral hue,
Till shines the rounded harvest-moon,
And velvet dahlias drink the dew.

THE NEW EDEN.

SEPTEMBER 1.

The year is getting to feel rich, for his golden fruits are ripening fast, and he has a large balance in the barns, which are his banks. The members of his family have found out that he is well to do in the world. September is dressing herself in showy dahlias and splendid marigolds and starry zinnias.

THE SEASONS.



SEPTEMBER 2.

And far o'er many a distant zone
These wrecks of Eden still are flung :
The fruits that Paradise hath known
Are still in earthly gardens hung.

Yes, by our own unstoried stream
The pink-white apple-blossoms burst
That saw the young Euphrates gleam, —
That Gihon's circling waters nursed.

For us the ambrosial pear displays
The wealth its arching branches hold,
Bathed by a hundred summery days
In floods of mingling fire and gold.

And here, where beauty's cheek of flame
With morning's earliest beam is fed,
The sunset-painted peach may claim
To rival its celestial red.

THE NEW EDEN.

SEPTEMBER 3.

Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavor of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a commonplace character, as the rinsings of an unwashed wine glass spoil a draught of fair water.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 4.

And nearer, nearer still, the tide
Of music seems to come,
There's something like a human voice,
And something like a drum;
You sit in speechless agony,
Until your ear is dumb.

You think they are crusaders, sent
From some infernal clime,
To pluck the eyes of Sentiment,
And dock the tail of Rhyme,
To crack the voice of Melody,
And break the legs of Time.

But hark! the air again is still,
The music all is ground,
And silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound;
It cannot be, — it is, — it is, —
A hat is going round!

THE MUSIC-GRINDERS.

SEPTEMBER 5.

I never heard but two voices in my life that frightened me by their sweetness.

— Frightened you? — Yes, frightened me. They made me feel as if there might be constituted a creature with such a chord in her voice to some string in another's soul, that if she but spoke, he would leave all and follow her, though it were into the jaws of Erebus. Our only chance to keep our wits is, that there are so few natural chords between others' voices and this string in our souls, and that those which at first may have jarred a little by and by come into harmony with it.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 6.

Language is a solemn thing, it grows out of life, — out of its agonies and ecstasies, its wants and its weariness. Every language is a temple, in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined. Because time softens its outlines and rounds the sharp angles of its cornices, shall a fellow take a pickaxe to help time? . . .

After all, it is likely that the language will shape itself by larger forces than phonography and dictionary-making. You may spade up the ocean as much as you like and harrow it afterwards, if you can, — but the moon will still lead the tides, and the winds will form their surface.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 7.

Every human soul leaves its port with sealed orders. These may be opened earlier or later on its voyage, but until they are opened no one can tell what is to be his course or to what harbor he is bound.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Every event that a man would master must be mounted on the run, and no man ever caught the reins of a thought except as it galloped by him.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



SEPTEMBER 8.

Twice had the mellowing sun of autumn crowned
The hundredth circle of his yearly round,
When, as we meet to-day, our fathers met :
That joyous gathering who can e'er forget. . . .

Two voices, only two, to earth belong,
Of all whose accents met the listening throng :
Winthrop, alike for speech and guidance framed,
On that proud day a twofold duty claimed :
One other yet, — remembered or forgot, —
Forgive my silence if I name him not.
Can I believe it ? I, whose youthful voice
Claimed a brief gamut, — notes not over-choice, —
Stood undismayed before the solemn throng,
And *Propria voce* sung that saucy song
Which even in memory turns my soul aghast, —
Felix audacia was the verdict cast.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

SEPTEMBER 9.

What dreams we've had of deathless name, as
scholars, statesmen, bards,
While Fame, the lady with the trump, held up her
picture cards !
Till, having nearly played our game, she gayly
whispered, " Ah !
I said you should be something grand, — you 'll
soon be grandpapa."

MEETING OF THE ALUMNI.

SEPTEMBER 10.

Little localized powers, and little narrow streaks
of specialized knowledge, are things men are very
apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise ;
but for this encouraging principle how many small
talents and little accomplishments would be ne-
glected !

Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to
human character what salt is to the ocean ; it keeps
it sweet, and renders it enduring. Say rather it
is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plum-
age which enables him to shed the rain that falls
on him and the wave in which he dips. When one
has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he
has lost *all* his illusions, his feathers will soon soak
through, and he will fly no more.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 11.

Hardly any one perfectly understands a poem but the poet himself. One naturally loves his own poem as no one else can. It fits the mental mould in which it was cast, and it will not exactly fit any other. For this reason I had rather listen to a poet reading his own verses than hear the best elocutionist that ever spouted recite them. He may not have a good voice or enunciation, but he puts his heart and his interpenetrative intelligence into every line, word, and syllable.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

SEPTEMBER 12.

From the poet's lips
His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him
Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow ;
He lives the passion over, while he reads,
That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,
And pours his life through each resounding line,
As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,
Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

Ah, brothers ! dear brothers ! the harp that I hold
No craftsman could string and no artisan mould ;
He shaped it, He strung it, who fashioned the
lyres

That ring with the hymns of the seraphim choirs.

MY ANNUAL.

SEPTEMBER 13.

We see nothing of the bees that built the honeycomb and stored it with its sweets, but we can trace the veining in the wings of insects that flitted through the forests which are now coal-beds, kept unchanging in the amber that holds them ; and so the passion of Sappho, the tenderness of Simonides, the purity of holy George Herbert, the lofty contemplativeness of James Shirley, are before us to-day as if they were living, in a few tears of amber verse. It seems, when one reads,

“ The glories of our birth and state,”

as if it were not a very difficult matter to gain immortality, — such an immortality at least as a perishable language can give. A single lyric is enough if one can only find in his soul and finish in his intellect one of those jewels fit to sparkle “on the stretched forefinger of all time.”

THE POET.

SEPTEMBER 14.

This, too, a conqueror ! His the vast domain,
Wider than widest sceptre-shadowed lands ;
Earth, and the weltering kingdom of the main
Laid their broad charters in his royal hands.

His was no taper lit in cloistered cage,
Its glimmer borrowed from the grove or porch ;
He read the record of the planet's page
By Etna's glare and Cotopaxi's torch.

HUMBOLDT'S BIRTHDAY.

SEPTEMBER 15.

I suppose that a man's mind does in time form a neutral salt with the elements in the universe for which it has special elective affinities. In fact, I look upon a library as a kind of mental chemist's shop, filled with the crystals of all forms and hues which have come from the union of individual thought with local circumstances or universal principles. THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Every library should try to be complete on something, if it were only on the history of pin-heads. I don't mean that I buy all the trashy compilations on my special subjects, but I try to have all the works of any real importance relating to them, old as well as new.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



SEPTEMBER 16.

On those dark shelves no housewife hand profanes,
O'er his mute files the monarch folio reigns ;
A mingled race, the wreck of chance and time,
That talk all tongues and breathe of every clime,
Each knows his place, and each may claim his part
In some quaint corner of his master's heart.

THE STUDY.

Smile at their first small ventures as we may,
The schoolboy's copy shapes the scholar's hand,
AMERICAN ACADEMY CENTENNIAL.

SEPTEMBER 17.

Full of crooked little streets ; but I tell you Boston has opened, and kept open, more turnpikes that lead straight to free thought and free speech and free deeds than any other city of live men or dead men, — I don't care how broad their streets are, nor how high their steeples !

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

“ Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man, if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar.”

Sir, — said I, — I am gratified with your remark. It expresses with pleasing vivacity that which I have sometimes heard uttered with malignant dullness. The satire of the remark is essentially true of Boston, — and of all other considerable — and inconsiderable — places with which I have had the privilege of being acquainted.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 18.

The conversational dogmatist on the imperial scale becomes every year more and more an impossibility. If he is in intelligent company he will be almost sure to find some one who knows more about some of the subjects he generalizes upon than any wholesale thinker who handles knowledge by the cargo is like to know.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 19.

Science is the topography of ignorance. From a few elevated points we triangulate vast spaces, inclosing infinite unknown details. We cast the lead, and draw up a little sand from abysses we shall never reach with our dredges.

The best part of our knowledge is that which teaches us where knowledge leaves off and ignorance begins. Nothing more clearly separates a vulgar from a superior mind, than the confusion in the first between the little that it truly knows, on the one hand, and what it half knows and what it thinks it knows, on the other.

BORDER LINES IN MEDICAL SCIENCE.



SEPTEMBER 20.

If a fellow attacked my opinions in print, would I reply? Not I. Do you think I don't understand what my friend, the Professor, long ago called *the hydrostatic paradox of controversy*?

Don't know what that means? — Well, I will tell you. You know that, if you had a bent tube, one arm of which was of the size of a pipe-stem and the other big enough to hold the ocean, water would stand at the same height in one as in the other. Controversy equalizes fools and wise men in the same way, — *and the fools know it.*

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 21.

Here glowed the apple with the pencilled streak
Of morning painted on its southern cheek ;
The pear's long necklace strung with golden drops,
Arched like the banian, o'er its pillared props.

DEDICATORY POEM.

Dear though the shadowy maple be,
And dearer still the whispering pine,
Dearest yon russet-laden tree
Browned by the heavy rubbing kine !

There childhood flung its rustling stone,
There venturous boyhood learned to climb, —
How well the early graft was known
Whose fruit was ripe ere harvest-time !

THE NEW EDEN.

SEPTEMBER 22.

No man could leave a sweeter memory than the author of "Rab and his Friends," and "Pet Marjorie." . . . I thought how much it would have added to the enjoyment of my visit if I could have taken his warm hand and listened to his friendly voice. I brought home with me a precious little manuscript, written expressly for me by one who had known Dr. John Brown from the days of her girlhood, in which his character appears in the same lovable and loving light as that which shines in every page he himself has written.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

SEPTEMBER 23.

Any new formula which suddenly emerges in our consciousness has its roots in long trains of thought; it is virtually old when it makes its appearance among the recognized growths of our intellect. Any crystalline group of musical words has had a long and still period to form in.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

SEPTEMBER 24.

In vain the delving antiquary tries
To find the tomb where generous Harvard lies :
Here, here, his lasting monument is found,
Where every spot is consecrated ground !

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

Lift up your eyes ! behold these pictured walls ;
Look where the flood of western glory falls
Through the great sunflower disk of blazing panes
In ruby, saffron, azure, emerald stains ;
With reverent step the marble pavement tread
Where our proud Mother's martyr-roll is read ;
See the great halls that cluster, gathering round
This lofty shrine with holiest memories
crowned ; . . .

Read on her standard, always in the van,
" TRUTH,"—the one word that makes a slave a man ;
Think whose the hands that fed her altar-fires,
Then count the debt we owe our scholar-sires.

VESTIGIA QUINQUE RETRORSUM.

SEPTEMBER 25.

I don't think there are many poets in the sense of creators; but of those sensitive natures which reflect themselves naturally in soft and melodious words, pleading for sympathy with their joys and sorrows, every literature is full. Nature carves with her own hands the brain which holds the creative imagination, but she casts the over-sensitive creatures in scores from the same mould.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

How many women are born too finely organized in sense and soul for the highway they must walk with feet unshod. Life is adjusted to the wants of the stronger sex. There are plenty of torrents to be crossed in its journey; but their stepping-stones are measured by the stride of man, and not of woman. THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



SEPTEMBER 26.

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone

Whose song has told their heart's sad story, —

Weep for the voiceless, who have known

The cross without the crown of glory!

Not where Leucadian breezes sweep

O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,

But where the glistening night-dews weep

On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

THE VOICELESS.

SEPTEMBER 27.

Thine was unstinted zeal, unchilled devotion,
While the blue realm had kingdoms to explore, —
Patience, like his who ploughed the unfurrowed
ocean,
Till o'er its margin loomed San Salvador.
Through the long nights I see thee ever waking,
Thy footstool earth, thy roof the hemisphere,
While with thy griefs our weaker hearts are aching,
Firm as thine equatorial's rock-based pier.

TO BENJAMIN APTHORP GOULD.

SEPTEMBER 28.

What is this life without the poor accidents
which made it our own, and by which we identify
ourselves? Ah me! I might like to be a winged
chorister, but still it seems to me I should hardly
be quite happy if I could not recall at will the Old
House with the Long Entry, and the White Cham-
ber (where I wrote the first verses that made me
known, with a pencil, *stans pede in uno*, pretty
nearly) and the Little Parlor, and the Study, and
the old books in uniforms as varied as those of
the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company,
and the front yard with the stars of Bethlehem
growing, flowerless, among the grass, and the dear
faces to be seen no more there or anywhere on this
earthly place of farewells.

THE POET.

SEPTEMBER 29.

Our ancient church ! its lowly tower
Beneath the loftier spire,
Is shadowed when the sunset hour
Clothes the tall shaft in fire ;
It sinks beyond the distant eye,
Long ere the glittering vane,
High wheeling in the western sky,
Has faded o'er the plain.

Like Sentinel and Nun, they keep
Their vigil on the green ;
One seems to guard, and one to weep,
The dead that lie between ;
And both roll out, so full and near,
Their music's mingling waves,
They shake the grass whose pennoned spear
Leans on the narrow graves.

THE CAMBRIDGE CHURCHYARD.

SEPTEMBER 30.

Between two breaths what crowded mysteries
lie, —

The first short gasp, the last and long drawn sigh !
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

A RHYMED LESSON.

October.

No more the summer floweret charms,
The leaves will soon be sere,
And Autumn folds his jewelled arms
Around the dying year ;
So, ere the waning seasons claim
Our leafless groves awhile,
With golden wine and glowing flame
We 'll crown our lonely isle.

No bars of steel, or walls of stone,
Our little empire bound,
But, circling with his azure zone,
The sea runs foaming round ;
The whitening wave, the purpled skies,
The blue and lifted shore,
Braid with their dim and blending dyes
Our wide horizon o'er.

Once more the merry voices sound
Within the antlered hall,
And long and loud the baying hounds
Return the hunter's call ;
And through the woods, and o'er the hill,
And far along the bay,
The driver's horn is sounding shrill, —
Up, sportsmen, and away !

THE ISLAND HUNTING-SONG

OCTOBER 1.

October, the extravagant sister, has ordered an immense amount of the most gorgeous forest tapestry for her grand reception. . . . Two autumnal wonders have been much written about, and never yet reached, — the change of the forest leaves and the Indian summer.

THE SEASONS.

OCTOBER 2.

Some of the smaller cities are charming. If they have an old church or two, a few stately mansions of former grandees, here and there an old dwelling with the second story projecting, — if they have, scattered about, those mighty square houses built something more than half a century ago, — if they have gardens with elbowed apple-trees, — if they have a little grass in the side-streets, enough to betoken quiet without proclaiming decay, — I think I could go to pieces, after my life's work were done, in one of those tranquil places as sweetly as in any cradle that an old man may be rocked to sleep in.

Rapidly growing towns are most unfavorable to the imaginative and reflective faculties. Let a man live in one of these old quiet places, — and the wine of his soul, which is kept thick and turbid by the rattle of busy streets, settles, and, as you hold it up, you may see the sun through it by day and the stars by night.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 3.

Thoughtful in youth, but not austere in age;
Calm, but not cold and cheerful though a sage;
Too true to flatter, and too kind to sneer,
And only just when seemingly severe;
So gently blending courtesy and art,
That wisdom's lips seemed borrowing friendship's
heart;

Taught by the sorrows that his age had known
In others' trials to forget his own,
As hour by hour his lengthened day declined,
A sweeter radiance lingered o'er his mind.
Cold were the lips that spoke his early praise,
And hushed the voices of his morning days,
Yet the same accents dwelt on every tongue,
And love renewing kept him ever young.

A PORTRAIT.

(*Dr. James Jackson.*)

OCTOBER 4.

Don't let your heart grow cold, and you may
carry cheerfulness and love with you into the teens
of your second century, if you can last so long.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Fame usually comes to those who are thinking
about something else, — very rarely to those who
say to themselves, "Go to, now, let us be a cele-
brated individual!"

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 5.

A man who seems to have been anointed from his birth ; who lived a life pure, laborious, self-denying, occupied with the highest themes, and busy in the highest kind of labor, — such a life as in another church might have given him a place in the “Acta Sanctorum.” We can in part account for what he was when we remember his natural inherited instincts, his training, and his faith. His ancestors had fed on sermons so long that he must have been born with Scriptural texts lying latent in his embryonic thinking-marrow, like the undeveloped picture in a film of collodion.

—♦— JONATHAN EDWARDS.

OCTOBER 6.

How vast the workroom where he brought
The viewless implements of thought !
The wit how subtle, how profound,
That Nature’s tangled webs unwound ;

That through the clouded matrix saw
The crystal planes of shaping law,
Through these the sovereign skill that planned, —
The Father’s care, the Master’s hand ! . . .

Farewell ! the spirit needs must rise,
So long a tenant of the skies, —
Rise to that home all worlds above
Whose sun is God, whose light is love.

BENJAMIN PEIRCE.

October 6, 1880.

OCTOBER 7.

Self-made men? — Well, yes. Of course everybody likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all. Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands? . . . A regular hand could certainly have built a better house; but it was a very good house for a "self-made" carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded. They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 8.

You can't keep a dead level long, if you burn everything down flat to make it. Why, bless your soul, if all the cities of the world were reduced to ashes, you'd have a new set of millionnaires in a couple of years or so out of the trade in potash. In the mean time, what is the use of setting the man with the silver watch against the man with the gold watch, and the man without any watch against them both.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 9.

Lord of all being ! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star ;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near !

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day ;
Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn ;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn ;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign :
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine !

A SUN-DAY HYMN.

OCTOBER 10.

I am too much a lover of genius, I sometimes think, and too often get impatient with dull people, so that, in their weak talk, where nothing is taken for granted, I look forward to some future possible state of development, when a gesture passing between a beatified human soul and an archangel shall signify as much as the complete history of a planet, from the time when it curdled to the time when its sun was burned out. And yet, when a strong brain is weighed with a true heart, it seems to me like balancing a bubble against a wedge of gold.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 11.

It is the time to be in the woods or on the seashore,—a sweet season that should be given to lonely walks, to stumbling about in old churchyards, plucking on the way the aromatic silvery herb everlasting, and smelling at its dry flower until it etherizes the soul into aimless reveries outside of space and time.

THE SEASONS.

OCTOBER 12.

On many a field he fought in wilds afar ;
See on his swarthy cheek the bullet's scar !
There hangs a murderous tomahawk ; beneath,
Without its blade, a knife's embroidered sheath ;
Save for the stroke his trusty weapon dealt
His scalp had dangled at their owner's belt ;
But not for him such fate ; he lived to see
The bloodier strife that made our nation free,
To serve with willing toil, with skilful hand,
The war-worn saviors of the bleeding land.
His wasting life to others' needs he gave, —
Sought rest in home and found it in the grave.
See where the stones life's brief memorials keep,
The tablet telling where he "fell on sleep," —
Watched by a winged cherub's rayless eye, —
A scroll above that says we all must die, —
Those saddening lines beneath, the "Night
Thoughts" lent :

So stands the Soldier's, Surgeon's monument.

(*A Family Record.*)

DR. DAVID HOLMES.

OCTOBER 13.

I found that the difference between her reading and mine was like that of a man's and a woman's dusting a library. The man flaps about with a bunch of feathers; the woman goes to work softly with a cloth. She does not raise half the dust, nor fill her own mouth and eyes with it, — but she goes into all the corners, and attends to the leaves as much as the covers. — Books are the *negative* pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are reproduced. A woman (of the right kind), reading after a man, follows him as Ruth followed the reapers of Boaz, and her gleanings are often the finest of the wheat.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 14.

You talk of the fire of genius. Many a blessed woman, who dies unsung and unremembered, has given out more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, without a spark flitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories smoking, or a hundred odes simmering, in the brains of so many men of genius. It is in *latent caloric*, if I may borrow a philosophical expression, that many of the noblest hearts give out the life that warms them. THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 15.

The measured footsteps of the Fates are dumb,
Unseen, unheard, unheralded, they come,
Prophet and priest and all their following fail.
Who then is left to rend the future's veil?

Who but the poet, he whose nicer sense
No film can baffle with its slight defence,
Whose finer vision marks the waves that stray,
Felt, but unseen, beyond the violet ray? —
Stays not for time his secrets to reveal,
But reads his message ere he breaks the seal.
So Mantua's bard foretold the coming day
Ere Bethlehem's infant in the manger lay;
The promise trusted to a mortal tongue
Found listening ears before the angels sung.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

OCTOBER 16.

A man like Newton or Leibnitz or Haller used
to paint a picture of outward or inward nature
with a free hand, and stand back and look at it as
a whole and feel like an archangel; but nowadays
you have a Society, and they come together and
make a great mosaic, each man bringing his little
bit and sticking it in its place, but so taken up
with his petty fragment that he never thinks of
looking at the picture the little bits make when
they are put together. You can't get any talk out
of these specialists away from their own subjects.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 17.

How blest is he who knows no meaner strife
Than Art's long battle with the foes of life !
No doubt assails him, doing still his best,
And trusting kindly Nature for the rest. . . .
He comes ; the languid sufferer lifts his head
And smiles a welcome from his weary bed. . . .
How can he feel the petty stings of grief
Whose cheering presence always brings relief ?
What ugly dreams can trouble his repose
Who yields himself to soothe another's woes ?

No safeguard his ; no amulet he wears,
Too well he knows that Nature never spares
Her truest servant, powerless to defend
From her own weapons her unshrinking friend.
He dares the fate the bravest well might shun,
Nor asks reward save only Heaven's " Well done ! "
CENTENNIAL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

OCTOBER 18.

Four gospels tell their story to mankind,
And none so full of soft, caressing words
That bring the Maid of Bethlehem and her Babe
Before our tear-dimmed eyes, as his who learned
In the meek service of his gracious art
The tones which, like the medicinal balms
That calm the sufferer's anguish, soothe our souls.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

OCTOBER 19.

No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul ; it takes one that knows it well, — parent, child, brother, sister, intimate.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 20.

Little I ask ; my wants are few ;

I only wish a hut of stone,

(A *very plain* brown stone will do)

That I may call my own ; —

And close at hand is such a one,

In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me ;

Three courses are as good as ten ; —

If Nature can subsist on three,

Thank Heaven for three. Amen !

I always thought cold victual nice ; —

My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land ; —

Give me a mortgage here and there, —

Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,

Or trifling railroad share, —

I only ask that Fortune send

A *little* more than I shall spend.

CONTENTMENT.

OCTOBER 21.

No Alpine needle, with its climbing spire,
Brings down for mortals the Promethean fire,
If careless nature have forgot to frame
An altar worthy of the sacred flame.
Unblest by any save the goatherd's lines,
Mont Blanc rose soaring through his "sea of
pines ;"
In vain the rivers from their ice-caves flash ;
No hymn salutes them but the Ranz des Vaches,
Till lazy Coleridge, by the morning's light,
Gazed for a moment on the fields of white,
And lo, the glaciers found at length a tongue,
Mont Blanc was vocal, and Chamouni sung !

A RHYMED LESSON.

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith, —
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith ;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the
free, —

Just read on his metal, " My country," " of thee ! "

THE BOYS.

OCTOBER 22.

The real forest is hardly still except in the Indian summer ; then there is death in the house, and they are waiting for the sharp shrunken months to come with white raiment for the summer's burial.

ELSIE VENNER.

OCTOBER 23.

Perhaps the herb everlasting, the fragrant *immortelle* of our autumn fields, has the most suggestive odor to me of all those that set me dreaming. I can hardly describe the strange thoughts and emotions that come to me as I inhale the aroma of its pale, dry, rustling flowers. A something it has of sepulchral spicery, as if it had been brought from the core of some great pyramid, where it had lain on the breast of a mummied Pharaoh. Something, too, of immortality in the sad, faint sweetness lingering so long in its lifeless petals. Yet this does not tell why it fills my eyes with tears and carries me in blissful thought to the banks of asphodel that border the River of Life.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 24.

His rest is by the storm-swept waves
Whom life's wild tempests roughly tried,
Whose heart was like the streaming caves
Of ocean, throbbing at his side.

Death's cold white hand is like the snow
Laid softly on the furrowed hill,
It hides the broken seams below,
And leaves the summit brighter still.

DANIEL WEBSTER.

October 24, 1852.

OCTOBER 25.

Marbles forget their message to mankind:
In his own verse the poet still we find,
In his own page his memory lives enshrined,
As in their amber sweets the smothered bees, —
As the fair cedar, fallen before the breeze,
Lies self-embalmed amidst the mouldering trees.

BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.



OCTOBER 26.

There are two kinds of poets, just as there are two kinds of blondes. There are blondes who are such simply by deficiency of coloring matter, — *negative* or *washed* blondes.

There are others that are shot through with golden light, with tawny or fulvous tinges in various degree, — *positive* or *stained* blondes, dipped in yellow sunbeams, and as unlike in their mode of being to the others as an orange is unlike a snow-ball.

Just so we have the great sun-kindled, constructive imaginations, and a far more numerous class of poets who have a certain kind of moonlight-genius given them to compensate for their imperfection of nature. Their want of mental coloring matter makes them sensitive to those impressions which stronger minds neglect or never feel at all.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 27.

Faith always implies the disbelief of a lesser fact in favor of a greater. A little mind often sees the unbelief, without seeing the belief, of a large one.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

How many of our most cherished beliefs are like those drinking-glasses of the ancient pattern, that serve us well so long as we keep them in our hand, but spill all if we attempt to set them down !

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

OCTOBER 28.

The portrait of Erasmus by Hans Holbein is one of those pictures which help to make the Old World worth a voyage across the Atlantic. Portraits of Erasmus are not uncommon ; every scholar would know him if he met him in the other world with the look he wore on earth. . . . What a face it is which Holbein has handed down to us ! How dry it is with scholastic labor, how keen with shrewd scepticism, how worldly-wise, how conscious of its owner's wide-awake sagacity ! Erasmus and Rabelais, — Nature used up all her arrows for their quivers, and had to wait a hundred years and more before she could find shafts enough for the outfit of Voltaire.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

OCTOBER 29.

The wreath that star-crowned Shelley gave
Is lying on thy Roman grave,
Yet on its turf young April sets
Her store of slender violets ;
Though all the gods their garlands shower,
I too may bring one purple flower. . . .
Meek child of earth ! thou wilt not shame
The sweet, dead poet's holy name ;
The God of music gave thee birth,
Called from the crimson-spotted earth,
Where, sobbing his young life away,
His own fair Hyacinthus lay.
— The hyacinth my garden gave
Shall lie upon that Roman grave !

AFTER A LECTURE ON KEATS.

OCTOBER 30.

There is little need of trying to paint the still, warm, misty, dreamy Indian summer in words ; there are many states that have no articulate vocabulary, and are only to be reproduced by music, and the mood this season produces is of that nature. By and by, when the white man is thoroughly Indianized (if he can bear the process), some native Haydn will perhaps turn the Indian summer into the loveliest *andante* of the new "Creation."

THE SEASONS.

OCTOBER 31.

From the first gleam of morning to the gray
Of peaceful evening, lo, a life unrolled !
In woven pictures all its changes told,
Its lights, its shadows, every flitting ray
Till the long curtain, falling, dims the day,
Steals from the dial's disk the sunlight's gold
And all the graven hours grow dark and cold
Where late the glowing blaze of noontide lay.
Ah ! the warm blood runs wild in youthful veins, —
Let me no longer play with painted fire ;
New songs for new-born days ! I would not tire
The listening ears that wait for fresher strains
In phrase new-moulded, new forged rhythmic
chains,
With plaintive measures from a worn-out lyre.

PREFIXED TO A VOLUME OF POEMS.

1881.

November.

As through the forest, disarrayed
By chill November, late I strayed,
A lonely minstrel of the wood
Was singing to the solitude :
I loved thy music, thus I said,
When o'er thy perch the leaves were spread ;
Sweet was thy song, but sweeter now
Thy carol on the leafless bough.

Sing, little bird ! thy note shall cheer
The sadness of the dying year. . . .

The summer's throbbing chant is done
And mute the choral antiphon ;
The birds have left the shivering pines
To flit among the trellised vines,
Or fan the air with scented plumes
Amid the love-sick orange-blooms,
And thou art here alone, — alone, —

Sing, little bird ! the rest have flown. . . .

Fast, fast the lengthening shadows creep,
The songless fowls are half asleep,
The air grows chill, the setting sun
May leave thee ere thy song is done,
The pulse that warms thy breast grow cold,
Thy secret die with thee, untold :
The lingering sunset still is bright, —

Sing, little bird ! 't will soon be night.

NOVEMBER 1.

Those who have no ear for music must be very careful how they speak about that mysterious world of thrilling vibrations which are idle noises to them. And so the true saint can be entirely appreciated only by saintly natures.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Here, as to the patriarch's tent,
God's angel comes a guest ;
He comes on Heaven's high errand sent,
In earth's poor raiment drest.

We see no halo round his brow
Till love its own recalls,
And like a leaf that quits the bough,
The mortal vesture falls.

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE.

NOVEMBER 2.

I love Nature, and human nature, its thoughts, affections, dreams, aspirations, delusions, — Art in all its forms, — *virtu* in all its eccentricities, — old stories from black-letter volumes and yellow manuscripts, and new projects out of hot brains not yet imbedded in the snows of age. I love the generous impulses of the reformer; but not less does my imagination feed itself upon the old litanies, so often warmed by the human breath upon which they were wafted to heaven that they glow through our frames like our own heart's blood.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 3.

This was the first sweet singer in the cage
Of our close-woven life. A new-born age
Claims in his vesper song its heritage. . . .

How can we praise the verse whose music flows
With solemn cadence and majestic close,
Pure as the dew that filters through the rose?

How shall we thank him that in evil days
He faltered never, — nor for blame, nor praise,
Nor hire, nor party, shamed his earlier lays?

¶

BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.



NOVEMBER 4.

The highways of literature are spread over with the shells of dead novels, each of which has been swallowed at a mouthful by the public, and is done with. But write a volume of poems. No matter if they are all bad but one, if that one is very good. It will carry your name down to posterity like the ring of Thothmes, like the coin of Alexander. I don't suppose one would care a great deal about it a hundred or a thousand years after he is dead, but I don't feel quite sure. It seems as if, even in heaven, King David might remember "The Lord is my Shepherd" with a certain twinge of earthly pleasure. But we don't know, we don't know.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 5.

We who behold our autumn sun below
The Scorpion's sign, against the Archer's bow,
Know well what parting means of friend from
friend ;

After the snows no freshening dews descend,
And what the frost has marred, the sunshine will
not mend.

To H. W. LONGFELLOW.

NOVEMBER 6.

I should like to live long enough to see the course of the Tiber turned, and the bottom of the river thoroughly dredged. I wonder if they would find the seven-branched golden candlestick brought from Jerusalem by Titus, and said to have been dropped from the Milvian bridge. I have often thought of going fishing for it some year when I wanted a vacation, as some of my friends used to go to Ireland to fish for salmon. We all know how it looks well enough, from the figure of it on the Arch of Titus, but I should like to "heft" it in my own hand and carry it home and shine it up (excuse my colloquialisms), and sit down and look at it, and think and think and think until the Temple of Solomon built up its walls of hewn stone and its roofs of cedar around me as noiselessly as when it rose, and "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building."

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 7.

Mighty curious creatures, these house-flies !
Talk about miracles ! Was there ever anything
more miraculous, so far as our common observa-
tion goes, than the coming and the going of these
creatures ? Why did n't Job ask where the flies
come from and where they go to ? . . . Where are
the cradles of the young flies ? Where are the
cemeteries of the dead ones, or do they die at all
except when we kill them ? You think all the flies
of the year are dead and gone, and there comes a
warm day and all at once there is a general resur-
rection of them ; they had been taking a nap, that
is all.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



NOVEMBER 8.

Choose well your *set* ; our feeble nature seeks
The aid of clubs, the countenance of cliques ;
And with this object settle first of all
Your weight of metal and your size of ball.
Track not the steps of such as hold you cheap,
Too mean to prize, though good enough to keep ;
The " real, genuine, no-mistake Tom Thumbs "
Are little people fed on great men's crumbs.

Yet keep no followers of that hateful brood
That basely mingles with the wholesome food
The tumid reptile, which, the poet said,
Doth wear a precious jewel in his head.

A RHYMED LESSON.

NOVEMBER 9.

The Prince is of a lively temperament and a very cheerful aspect, — a young girl would call him “jolly” as well as “nice.” . . . It is really easier to feel at home with the highest people in the land than with the awkward commoner who was knighted yesterday. When “My Lord and Sir Paul” came into the Club which Goldsmith tells us of, the hilarity of the evening was instantly checked. The entrance of a dignitary like the present Prince of Wales would not have spoiled the fun of the evening. If there is any one accomplishment specially belonging to princes, it is that of making the persons they meet feel at ease.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

NOVEMBER 10.

He touched the eyelids of the blind,
And lo! the veil withdrawn,
As o'er the midnight of the mind,
He led the light of dawn.

He asked not whence the fountains roll
No traveller's foot has found,
But mapped the desert of the soul
Untracked by sight or sound.

What prayers have reached the sapphire throne,
By silent fingers spelt,
For him who first through depths unknown
His doubtful pathway felt.

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE. S. G. H.

NOVEMBER 11.

Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

Tic-tac ! tic-tac ! go the wheels of thought ; our will cannot stop them ; they cannot stop themselves ; sleep cannot still them ; madness only makes them go faster ; death alone can break into the case, and, seizing the ever-swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escapement we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 12.

O Love Divine that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,
We smile at pain while Thou art near !
Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near !
On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love Divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, Thou art near !

HYMN OF TRUST.

NOVEMBER 13.

The Daguerreotype has fixed the most fleeting of our illusions, that which the apostle and the philosopher and the poet have alike used as the type of instability and unreality. The photograph has completed the triumph, by making a sheet of paper reflect images like a mirror and hold them as a picture.

This triumph of human ingenuity is the most audacious, remote, improbable, incredible,—the one that would seem least likely to be regained, if all traces of it were lost, of all the discoveries man has made. It has become such an every-day matter with us, that we forget its miraculous nature.

THE STEREOSCOPE AND THE STEREOGRAPH.

NOVEMBER 14.

The prophet's chariot, drawn by steeds of flame,
For daily use our travelling millions claim ;
The face we love a sunbeam makes our own ;
No more the surgeon hears the sufferer's
groan ; . . .

Still a new miracle each year supplies.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

A new epoch in the history of human progress
dates from the time when He who

“Never but in uncreated light
Dwelt from eternity ”

took a pencil of fire from the “angel standing in
the sun,” and placed it in the hands of a mortal.

THE STEREOSCOPE AND THE STEREOGRAPH.

NOVEMBER 15.

Arrowheads must be brought to a sharp point and the guillotine-axe must have a slanting edge. Something intensely human, narrow, and definite pierces to the seat of our sensibilities more readily than huge occurrences and catastrophes. A nail will pick a lock that defies hatchet and hammer. "The Royal George" went down with all her crew, and Cowper wrote an exquisitely simple poem about it; but the leaf which holds it is smooth, while that which bears the lines on his mother's portrait is blistered with tears.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 16.

The *Brahmin caste of New England*. This is the harmless, inoffensive, untitled aristocracy which many readers will at once acknowledge. There are races of scholars among us, in which aptitude for learning, and all these marks of it I have spoken of, are congenital and hereditary. Their names are always on some college catalogue or other. They break out every generation or two in some learned labor which calls them up after they seem to have died out. At last some newer name takes their place, it may be, — but you inquire a little and you find it is the blood of the Edwardses or the Chauncys or the Ellerys or some of the old historic scholars, disguised under the altered name of a female descendant.

ELSIE VENNER.

NOVEMBER 17.

What were our life, with all its rents and seams,
Stripped of its purple robes, our waking dreams?
The poet's song, the bright romancer's page,
The tinselled shows that cheat us on the stage
Lead all our fancies captive at their will;
Three years or threescore, we are children still.

OPENING OF THE FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE.

NOVEMBER 18.

What constitutes a man a gentleman?

- a. Not trying to be a gentleman.
- b. Self-respect underlying courtesy.
- c. Knowledge and observance of the *fitness of things* in social intercourse.

Good dressing, quiet ways, low tones of voice, lips that can wait, and eyes that do not wander, — shyness of personalities, except in certain intimate communions, — to be *light in hand* in conversation, to have ideas, but to be able to make talk, if necessary, without them, — to belong to the company you are in, and not to yourself, — to have nothing in your dress or furniture so fine that you cannot afford to spoil it and get another like it, yet to preserve the harmonies throughout your person and dwelling. I should say that this was a fair capital of manners to begin with.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 19.

Sometimes in dim November's narrowing day,
When all the season's pride has passed away,
As mid the blackened stems and leaves we stray,

We spy in sheltered nook or rocky cleft
A starry disk the hurrying winds have left,
Of all its blooming sisterhood bereft :

Some pansy, with its wondering baby eyes —
Poor wayside nursling ! — fixed in blank surprise
At the rough welcome of unfriendly skies ;

Or golden daisy, — will it dare disclaim
The lion's tooth, to wear this gentler name ?
Or blood-red salvia, with its lips aflame :

The storms have stripped the lily and the rose,
Still on its cheek the flush of summer glows,
And all its heart-leaves kindle as it blows. **AVE.**

NOVEMBER 20.

You know twenty men of talent, who are making
their way in the world ; you may, perhaps, know
one man of genius, and very likely do not want to
know any more. For a divine instinct, such as
drives the goose southward and the poet heaven-
ward, is a hard thing to manage, and proves too
strong for many whom it possesses. It must have
been a terrible thing to have a friend like Chatter-
ton or Burns.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 21.

Talent is a very common family trait ; genius belongs rather to individuals ; — just as you find one giant or one dwarf in a family, but rarely a whole brood of either. Talent is often to be envied, and genius very commonly to be pitied. It stands twice the chance of the other of dying in hospital, in jail, in debt, in bad repute. It is a perpetual insult to mediocrity ; its every word is a trespass against somebody's vested ideas.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 22.

There is nothing gives glory and grandeur and romance and mystery to a place like the impending presence of a high mountain. Our beautiful Northampton with its fair meadows and noble stream is lovely enough, but owes its surpassing attraction to those twin summits which brood over it like living presences, looking down into its streets as if they were its tutelary divinities, dressing and undressing their green shrines, robing themselves in jubilant sunshine or in sorrowing clouds, and doing penance in the snowy shroud of winter, as if they had living hearts under their rocky ribs and changed their mood like the children of the soil at their feet, who grow up under their almost parental smiles and frowns.

ELSIE VENNER.

NOVEMBER 23.

There are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of these jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel.

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is, to be sure, at times ! A ground-glass shade over a gas-lamp does not bring more solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one to our minds.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



NOVEMBER 24.

Men often remind me of pears in their way of coming to maturity. Some are ripe at twenty, like human Jargonelles, and must be made the most of, for their day is soon over. Some come into their perfect condition late, like the autumn kinds, and they last better than the summer fruit. And some that, like the Winter-Nelis, have been hard and uninviting until all the rest have had their season, get their glow and perfume long after the frost and snow have done their worst with the orchards.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

NOVEMBER 25.

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
The names that pleased our mortal ears ;
In some sweet lull of harp and song
For earth-born spirits none too long,
Just whispering of the world below
Where this was Bill, and that was Joe ?

No matter ; while our home is here
No sounding name is half so dear ;
When fades at length our lingering day,
Who cares what pompous tombstones say ?
Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. Hic jacet Bill.

BILL AND JOE.

NOVEMBER 26.

Our honest Puritan festival is spreading, not, as formerly, as a kind of opposition Christmas, but as a welcome prelude and adjunct, a brief interval of good cheer and social rejoicing, heralding the longer season of feasting and rest from labor in the month that follows.

Thanksgiving is the winding up of autumn. The leaves are off the trees, except here and there on a beech or an oak ; there is nothing left on the boughs but a few nuts and empty birds' nests. The earth looks desolate, and it will be a comfort to have the snow on the ground, and to hear the merry jingle of the sleigh-bells.

THE SEASONS.

NOVEMBER 27.

As in some great artist's studio one may find unfinished sketches which he recognizes as the first growing conceptions of pictures painted in after years, so we see that Nature often sketches, as it were, a living portrait, which she leaves in its rudimentary condition, perhaps for the reason that earth has no colors which can worthily fill in an outline too perfect for humanity. The sketch is left in its consummate incompleteness because this mortal life is not rich enough to carry out the Divine idea.

Such an unfinished but unmatched outline is that which I find in the long portrait-gallery of memory, recalled by the name of Charles Chauncy Emerson. Save for a few brief glimpses of another, almost lost among my life's early shadows, this youth was the most angelic adolescent my eyes ever beheld.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

NOVEMBER 28.

Thou calm, chaste scholar ! I can see thee now,
The first young laurels on thy pallid brow,
O'er thy slight figure floating lightly down
In graceful folds the academic gown,
On thy curled lip the classic lines that taught
How nice the mind that sculptured them with
thought,
And triumph glistening in the clear blue eye,
Too bright to live, — but O, too fair to die.

POETRY.

NOVEMBER 29.

One memory predominates over all others, in walking through the halls, or still more in wandering through the grounds of Wilton House. Here Sir Philip Sidney wrote his "Arcadia," and the ever youthful presence of the man himself rather than the recollection of his writings takes possession of us. . . . Sidney, "that glorious star, that lively pattern of virtue and the lovely joy of all the learned sort, — born into the world to show unto our age a sample of ancient virtue."

Here where he mused and wrote, and shaped his lofty plans for a glorious future, he lives once more in our imagination, as if his spirit haunted the English Arcadia he loved so dearly.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

NOVEMBER 30.

Genius gets the world's praise, because its work is a tangible product, to be bought, or had for nothing. It bribes the common voice to praise it by presents of speeches, poems, statues, pictures, or whatever it can please with. Character evolves its best products for home consumption ; but, mind you, it takes a deal more to feed a family for thirty years than to make a holiday feast for our neighbors once or twice in our lives.

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

December.

NEARING THE SNOW-LINE.

SLOW toiling upward from the misty vale
I leave the bright enamelled zones below ;
No more for me their beauteous bloom shall
glow,
Their lingering sweetness load the morning gale ;
Few are the slender flowerets, scentless, pale,
That on their ice-clad stems all trembling blow
Along the margin of unmelting snow ;
Yet with unsaddened voice thy verge I hail,
White realm of peace above the flowering line ;
Welcome thy frozen domes, thy rocky spires !
O'er thee undimmed the moon-girt planets shine,
On thy majestic altars fade the fires
That filled the air with smoke of vain desires,
And all the unclouded blue of heaven is thine !
1870.

DECEMBER 1.

Time that brings
An end to mortal things,
That sends the beggar Winter in the train
Of Autumn's burdened wain.
Time, that is heir of all our earthly state,
And knoweth well to wait
Till sea hath turned to shore and shore to sea,
If so it need must be,
Ere he make good his claim and call his own
Old empires overthrown, —
Time, who can find no heavenly orb too large
To hold its fee in charge,
Nor any notes that fill its beams so small,
But he shall care for all. EVEN-SONG.

DECEMBER 2.

The infancy and childhood of commencing old age have the same ingenuous simplicity and delightful unconsciousness about them as the first stage of the earlier periods of life shows. The great delusion of mankind is in supposing that to be individual and exceptional which is universal and according to law. A person is always startled when he hears himself seriously called an old man for the first time.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 3.

We may count as symbols the three hills of "this darling town of ours," as Emerson called it, and say that each had its beacon. Civil liberty lighted the torch on one summit, religious freedom caught the flame and shone from the second, and the lamp of the scholar has burned steadily on the third from the days when John Cotton preached his first sermon to those in which we are living.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Each has his features, whose exterior seal
A brush may copy, or a sunbeam steal ;
Go to his study, — on the nearest shelf
Stands the mosaic portrait of himself.

THE STUDY.

DECEMBER 4.

Carlyle did not show to as much advantage under the Boswellizing process as the dogmatist of the last century, dear old Dr. Johnson. But he remains not the less one of the really interesting men of his generation, — a man about whom we wish to know all that we have a right to know.

The long-suffering, much-laboring, loud-complaining Heraclitus of his time, whose very smile had a grimness in it more ominous than his scowl. . . . Poor man! — for all his 'complaining must have meant real discomfort, which a man of genius feels not less certainly than a common mortal.

OUR HUNDRED DAYS IN EUROPE.

DECEMBER 5.

The truant goose-quill travelling like Planchette;
Too ready servant, whose deceitful ways
Full many a slipshod line, alas ! betrays;
Hence of the rhyming thousand not a few
Have builded worse — a great deal — than they
knew.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

Who writes in verse that should have writ in
prose
Is like a traveller walking on his toes;
Happy the rhymester who in time has found
The heels he lifts were made to touch the ground.

POEM FOR THE HARVARD ANNIVERSARY.

DECEMBER 6.

There are words so delicious their sweetness will
smother
That boarding-school flavor of which we're
afraid, —
There is "lush" is a good one, and "swirl" is an-
other, —
Put both in one stanza, its fortune is made.

Perhaps you will answer all needful conditions
For winning the laurels to which you aspire,
By docking the tails of the two prepositions
I' the style o' the bards you so greatly admire.

A FAMILIAR LETTER.

DECEMBER 7.

O Damsel Dorothy ! Dorothy Q. !
Strange is the gift that I owe to you ;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring, —
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land ;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life ! . . .

Soft is the breath of a maiden's YES :
Not the light gossamer stirs with less ;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long !
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

DOROTHY Q.

DECEMBER 8.

A coin, a ring, a string of verses. These last, and hardly anything else does. Every century is an overloaded ship that must sink at last with most of its cargo. The small portion of its crew that get on board the new vessel which takes them off don't pretend to save a great many of the bulky articles. But they must not and will not leave behind the hereditary jewels of the race.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 9.

Besides all the impressions that furnished the stuff of the poem, there has been hard work to get the management of that wonderful instrument — the great organ, language. An artist that works in marble or colors has them all to himself and his tribe, but the man who moulds his thought in verse has to employ the materials vulgarized by everybody's use, and glorify them by his handling. . . . Read your Milton and see what training, what patient labor, it took before he could shape our common speech into his majestic harmonies.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 10.

There is infinite pathos in unsuccessful authorship. The book that perishes unread is the deaf mute of literature. The great asylum of Oblivion is full of such, making inaudible signs to each other in leaky garrets and unattainable dusty upper shelves.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

The young American of any freshness of intellect is stimulated to dangerous excess by the conditions of life into which he is born. There is a double proportion of oxygen in the New World air. The chemists have not found it out yet, but human brains and breathing organs have long since made the discovery. THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

DECEMBER 11.

Literary life is full of curious phenomena. I don't know that there is anything more noticeable than what we may call *conventional reputations*. There is a tacit understanding in every community of men of letters that they will not disturb the popular fallacy respecting this or that electro-gilded celebrity.

The venerable augurs of the literary or scientific temple may smile faintly when one of the tribe is mentioned; but the farce is in general kept up as well as the Chinese comic scene of entreating and imploring a man to stay with you, with the implied compact between you that he shall by no means think of doing it. A poor wretch he must be who would wantonly sit down on one of these bandbox reputations.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 12.

And *Channing* with his bland superior look,
Cool as a moonbeam on a frozen brook,
While the pale student, shivering in his shoes,
Sees from his theme the turgid rhetoric ooze.

VESTIGIA QUINQUE RETRORSUM.

With eye undimmed, with strength unworn,
Still toiling in your Master's field,
Before you wave the growths unshorn,
Their ripened harvest yet to yield.

1885.

TO FREDERICK HENRY HEDGE.

DECEMBER 13.

Nature lends her mirror of illusion
To win from saddening scenes our age-dimmed
eyes,
And misty day-dreams blend in sweet confusion
The wintry landscape and the summer skies.
So when the iron portal shuts behind us,
And life forgets us in its noise and whirl,
Visions that shunned the glaring noonday find us,
And glimmering starlight shows the gates of
pearl.

THE IRON GATE.

DECEMBER 14.

If a man has a genuine, sincere, hearty wish to get rid of his liberty, if he is really bent upon becoming a slave, nothing can stop him. And the temptation is to some natures a very great one. Liberty is often a heavy burden on a man. It involves that necessity for perpetual choice which is the kind of labor men have always dreaded.

ELSIE VENNER.

It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the crippled souls with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures. One who is born with such congenital incapacity that nothing can make a gentleman of him is entitled, not to our wrath, but to our profoundest sympathy.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 15.

Every scholar should have a book infirmary attached to his library. There should find a peaceable refuge the many books, invalids from their birth, which are sent "with the best regards of the Author"; the respected, but unpresentable cripples which have lost a cover; the odd volumes of honored sets which go mourning all their days for their lost brother; the school-books which have been so often the subjects of assault and battery, that they look as if the police court must know them by heart; these and still more the pictured story-books, beginning with Mother Goose, will be precious mementos by and by, when children and grandchildren come along.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 16.

Up to the age of thirty we spend our years like
change;
But creeping up towards the forties, as fast as the
old years fill,
And time steps in for payment, we seem to change
a bill.

AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE.

DECEMBER 17.

Friend, whom thy fourscore winters leave more
dear

Than when life's roseate summer on thy cheek
Burned in the flush of manhood's manliest year,
Lonely, how lonely ! is the snowy peak
Thy feet have reached, and mine have climbed so
near !

Close on my footsteps 'mid the landscape drear
I stretch my hand thine answering grasp to seek,
Warm with the love no rippling rhymes can
speak !

Look backwards ! From thy lofty height survey
Thy years of toil, of peaceful victories won,
Of dreams made real, largest hopes outrun !
Look forward ! Brighter than earth's morning ray
Streams the pure light of Heaven's unsetting sun,
The unclouded dawn of life's immortal day !

1887.

TO JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

DECEMBER 18.

If your name is to live at all, it is so much more
to have it live in people's hearts than only in their
brains ! I don't know that one's eyes fill with
tears when he thinks of the famous inventor of
logarithms, but a song of Burns's or a hymn of
Charles Wesley's goes straight to your heart, and
you can't help loving both of them, the sinner as
well as the saint.

THE POET AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

DECEMBER 19.

A whiter soul, a fairer mind,
A life with purer course and aim,
A gentler eye, a voice more kind,
We may not look on earth to find.
The love that lingers o'er his name
Is more than fame.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN AND ROBERT WARE.

DECEMBER 20.

The snow has capped yon distant hill,
At morn the running brook was still,
From driven herds the clouds that rise
Are like the smoke of sacrifice ;
Erelong the frozen sod shall mock
The ploughshare, changed to stubborn rock.
The brawling streams shall soon be dumb—
Sing, little bird ! the frosts have come.

AN OLD-YEAR SONG.

With all its inconveniences, winter is a cheerful season to people who are in comfortable circumstances and have open fire-places. A house without these is like a face without eyes, and that never smiles. I have seen respectability and amiability grouped over the airtight stove ; I have seen virtue and intelligence hovering over the register ; but I have never seen true happiness in a family circle where the faces were not illuminated by the blaze of an open fire-place.

THE SEASONS.

DECEMBER 21.

Here comes Winter, savage as when he met
the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Indian all over, his staff
a naked splintery hemlock, his robe torn from the
backs of bears and bisons, and fringed with wam-
pum of rattling icicles, turning the ground he
treads to ringing iron, and, like a mighty sower,
casting his snow far and wide, over all hills and
valleys and plains.

THE SEASONS.

Here 's to all the good people, wherever they be,
Who have grown in the shade of the liberty-tree;
We all love its leaves, and its blossoms and fruit,
But pray have a care of the fence round its root.

NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY CELEBRATION.

DECEMBER 22.

I saw in the naked forest
Our scattered remnant cast,
A screen of shivering branches
Between them and the blast;
The snow was falling round them,
The dying fell as fast,
I looked to see them perish,
When lo, the vision passed.

Again mine eyes were opened;
The feeble had waxed strong.
The babes had grown to sturdy men,
The remnant was a throng.

THE PILGRIM'S VISION.

DECEMBER 23.

Living, thou dost not live,
If mercy's spring run dry;
What Heaven has lent thee wilt thou freely give,
Dying, thou shalt not die ! THE PROMISE.

DECEMBER 24.

O thou whose breathing form was once so dear,
Whose cheering voice was music to my ear,
Art thou not with me as my feet pursue
The village paths so well thy boyhood knew, . . .
Or the old homestead's narrowed bounds explore,
Where sloped the roof that sheds the rains no
more,
Where one last relic still remains to tell
Here stood thy home, — the memory-haunted well,
Whose waters quench a deeper thirst than thine,
Changed at my lips to sacramental wine. . . .

Still in my heart thy loved remembrance burns ;
Still to my lips thy cherished name returns ;
Could I but feel thy gracious presence near
Amid the groves that once to thee were dear !
Could but my trembling lips with mortal speech
Thy listening ear for one brief moment reach !
How vain the dream ! The pallid voyager's track
No sign betrays ; he sends no message back. . . .
Now from the margin of the silent sea,
Take my last offering ere I cross to thee !

A FAMILY RECORD.

DECEMBER 25.

They found the crowded inn, the oxen's shed.
No pomp was there, no glory shone around
On the coarse straw that strewed the reeking
ground ;
One dim retreat a flickering torch betrayed, —
In that poor cell the Lord of Life was laid !

The wondering shepherds told their breathless
tale
Of the bright choir that woke the sleeping vale ;
Told how the skies with sudden glory flamed,
Told how the shining multitude proclaimed,
" Joy, joy to earth ! Behold the hallowed morn !
In David's city Christ the Lord is born ! " . . .

They spoke with hurried words and accents wild ;
Calm in his cradle slept the heavenly child.
No trembling word the mother's joy revealed, —
One sigh of rapture, and her lips were sealed ;
Unmoved she saw the rustic train depart,
But kept their words to ponder in her heart.

A MOTHER'S SECRET.



DECEMBER 26.

The lonely spirit of the mournful lay,
Which lives immortal as the verse of Gray,
In sable plumage slowly drifts along,
On eagle pinion, through the air of song.

POETRY.

DECEMBER 27.

I think there is one habit worse than that of punning. It is the gradual substitution of cant or flash terms for words which truly characterize their objects. I have known several very genteel idiots whose whole vocabulary had deliquesced into some half-dozen expressions.

These expressions come to be the algebraic symbols of minds which have grown too weak or indolent to discriminate. They are the blank checks of intellectual bankruptcy; — you may fill them up with what idea you like; it makes no difference, for there are no funds in the treasury upon which they are drawn.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.



DECEMBER 28.

Beliefs must be lived in for a good while, before they accommodate themselves to the soul's wants, and wear loose enough to be comfortable.

ELSIE VENNER.

I love the memory of the past, — its pressed yet
fragrant flowers, —

The moss that clothes its broken walls, — the ivy
on its towers; —

Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed, — my eyes
grow moist and dim,

To think of all the vanished joys that danced
around its brim. ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL.

DECEMBER 29.

Do you want to be remembered after the continents have gone under, and come up again, and dried, and bred new races? Have your name stamped on all your plates and cups and saucers. Nothing of you and yours will last like those.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

To shape a Senate's choice,
By the strong magic of the master's voice ;
To ride the stormy tempest of debate
That whirls the wavering fortunes of the state.

THE BANKER'S DINNER.



DECEMBER 30.

The seasons moved on in their rhythmical flow
With mornings like maidens that pouted or
smiled,
With the bud and the leaf and the fruit and the
snow,
And the year-books of Time in his alcoves were
piled,

THE SHADOWS.

Good-night, fond dreamer ! let the curtain fall :
The world's a stage and we are players all.
A strange rehearsal ! Kings without their crowns
And threadbare lords and jewel-wearing clowns
Speak the vain words that mock their throbbing
hearts
As Want, stern prompter ! spells them out their
parts.

THE OLD PLAYER.

DECEMBER 31.

Oh, let us trust with holy men of old
Not all the story here begun is told ;
So the tired spirit, waiting to be freed,
On life's last leaf with tranquil eye shall read,
By the pale glimmer of the torch reversed,
Not *Finis*, but *The End of Volume First !*

VESTIGIA QUINQUE RETRORSUM.

And so, my fellow-spectator at the great show of the Four Seasons, I wish you a pleasant seat through the performances, and that you may see as many repetitions of the same as it is good for you to witness, which I doubt not will be arranged for you by the Manager of the Exhibition. After a time you will notice that the light fatigues the eyes, so that by degrees they grow dim, and the ear becomes a little dull to the music, and possibly you may find yourself somewhat weary, — for many of the seats are very far from being well cushioned. . . . There are no checks given you as you pass out, by which you can return to the place you have left. But we are told that there is another exhibition to follow, in which the scenery will be far lovelier, and the music infinitely sweeter. Dear reader, I thank thee for thy courtesy, and let me venture to hope that we shall both be admitted to that better entertainment, and that thou and I may be seated not far from each other. THE SEASONS.





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